

E L F R I D A;

OR,

PATERNAL AMBITION.

A

N O V E L.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY A LADY.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:

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ELFRIDA.

A RESOLUTION.

HANNAH, for whom Elfrida immediately sent a servant, no sooner read Wilmot's letter, than she was aware from whence it originated. "Dear, dear Gentleman," said she, "how cutting it is to think of the trial he has undergone; this is Captain Overbury's work; I know it right well; just so, out of the very violence of his love, would he have left the woman he doated upon to break her heart, and then have broke his own, afterwards, from incurable sorrow."

"But how, my dear Hannah, how," said Elfrida, "am I to bring my mind to

a fit state for approaching the sacred altar, and devoting all my thoughts, my cares to a man—”

“It is terrible bitter,” said Hannah, “but what can be said for it? Mr. Wilmot, God bless him, would think it a sin to run away with you, for your own happiness, and I don’t see any other means of escaping.”

“Yes, Hannah, the grave; you will see me soon lodged there; and pray, my dear woman, let these two letters be buried with me; my peace they have killed at one stroke; if such wretchedness is the gift of good parents, what have bad ones more to bestow?”

“For certain,” said Hannah, “your elopements are very undutiful things, and seem to set all lawful power, as well as womanly decency, at defiance; but then to wed the man one hates—”

“That he is Wilmot’s enemy is the severe stroke. Marry the enemy of my dearest friend!”

“Aye,

"Aye, and moreover," said Hannah, "one that has always delighted in teizing and tormenting you; and, mercy upon us, who knows, beautiful and heavenly-minded as you are, mayhap marries you as much for the sake of that, as for any other earthly thing; but then what is to be done? Poor Captain Overbury has met with so many disappointments in his life, and such *mis*-usage, that it goes to the very heart of one to think of tormenting him."

"Best and most deceived of men!" said Elfrida, "You are right, Hannah, nor shall he receive a wound from his child's hand, undone as she must be, undone for ever; for I will no longer resist my destiny; you, Hannah, shall deck the bride with tears; already, my tender woman, they begin to flow, but weep not for me, my dissolution cannot be far distant, and the grave will give me everlasting tranquillity."

"And yet," said Hannah, "what a pity it is, that all the good things in the world, have no relish for you; what would not

thousands of ladies give to be just like you, here in Arcadia?"

Miss Overbury looked wild. "I will fly this once loved spot," said she, "it is all the chance I have to fly distraction, if Wilmot has seemed to approve this business only from exalted notions of generosity. But I know not what I would say, my dear Hannah."

"Sweet, sweet creature," said Hannah, sobbing, "would I could serve you, but we must live in this world as well as love, and where a young fellow has not the means.—"

"You are falling into great errors, said Elfrida, was Mr. Ellifson any other man upon earth, I would chearfully accept him; as my father and mother's choice, it would only be a second sacrifice of me to do them pleasure; or were Ellifson and Wilmot unknown to each other, I think I could subdue all my terrors of his strange turns of temper, but to marry, not merely against my heart's inclination, but to the mortal wounding of my friendship for one so deserving,

serving,

serving, and to whom I am so much obliged as I am to Mr. Wilmot, I cannot, cannot bear it."

"Ah! dear Miss Elfrida, but I will say nothing—Who is the he, I wonder, that could like to have his wife so much given in mind to another man?"

"Any liberal person, Mrs. Jenkins; we live in Arcadia until we make its inhabitants the standard of all human conduct; but believe me, though the world is not filled with such characters as Wilmot, it is not wholly overspread with such beings as Ellison."

"Yet what can be said for it," said Hannah; "there is not a soul, if you will not have Ellison, but will conclude you stark mad in love with Mr. Wilmot, and the poor Captain and Mrs. Overbury, whose arms are now opened in expectation of embracing you—"

"They shall not extend them in vain; they have the courage to trust the consequences of this compelled step; it shall then be taken. Henceforth, Hannah, I will be calm; I will

thank you for your good intention in saving my life, though it would have been much happier for me to have died, than to look back, as I impiously fear I shall, to that providential deliverance, with ingratitude to heaven; but death is no more than death let it come in what shape, and at what period it may; and as I did not perish then by a sudden and violent, I must content myself with lingering out my days, the victim of a slow, consuming and a secret disease."

"But bless your dearest life, Miss Elfrida, do determine what message you will send Mrs. Ellison, for this delay will only make her outrageous, without saving you a tittle."

"Go, Mrs. Jenkins, for I feel it must be so; go, for it may be of service to you to be my messenger, and tell Mrs. Ellison, I will no longer oppose her wishes, on condition that I am permitted to set off immediately to London."

Mrs. Ellison emptied her purse upon the table, to reward Hannah for her good news,

in

in which were four guineas and a shilling.

"She is once again," said she, "my child, and in every future instance shall be mistress of herself."

"Yes," said Elfrida, "every thing but happiness my friends are ready to bestow upon me."

When Elfrida entered the saloon, she found the whole family assembled, Mr. Ellifson, senior, got up to receive her, his son following at an humble distance.

"The end of your cares, my dear son," said Mrs. Ellifson, presenting Elfrida to him, "is now arrived, for this dear child at length accepts you, and I am happy thus to bestow her hand."

The poor Elfrida involuntarily drew back, tears started to her eyes, and her features wore every mark of distress; but Ellifson was too much taken up with his own joy, and his father and mother with their triumph, to pay any attention to what would greatly have alarmed less interested and more humane persons.

Dinner over, of which Elfrida had not tasted, happiness was drank to them in a bumper by Mr. and Mrs. Ellifon, who, understanding how to conduct themselves upon such occasions, ordered coffee in the drawing-room, and soon after retired.

Elfrida was scarcely able to support herself when she saw Ellifon approaching her; he took her unresisting hand, called himself the happiest of men, and might, perhaps, in any other woman's sight, have made a very tolerable figure; but to Elfrida an executioner would have had a thousand more charms, for she wished to die rather than become his wife.

Ellifon was chagrined at his ill success in recommending himself. "To what," said he, "Madam, am I to impute your *still* unfavorable brow? is it possible I can be cursed with a rival in your love, as well as in your friendship? for such are the distinctions you have taught me; were I sure of such an evil I should be frantic; and the frantic man, Miss Elfrida, not being master of

of

of his own actions, cannot be answerable for them."

"Sir," returned Elfrida, "you seem *still* to delight in assuming the character you know I least approve," (she lost her power of utterance for a moment, from the excess of her feelings) "I had a prepossession; what could give you a right to punish the object of it? nay, Sir," (for he was furiously breaking out) "never attempt to fetter me at all points, but hear me patiently, so far from it, that your delicacy, your honor, your humanity, ought to induce you to pity and spare me, under such a predicament, and, instead of soliciting, refuse my offered hand."

"A man in love! my Elfrida," said Elifon.

"I know of no love," said she, "that is not tender of the happiness of the woman beloved. The worst passions, Sir, we are well assured, may prophanely assume that gentle name; the Valet that would have violated the person of my dear mother, and rioted in the blood of my grandfather and

his household, called his motive love; and even malice and revenge have been bold enough to wear the same disguise."

"And with which, my dear Madam," said Ellison, "of all these flattering appellations, do you honor my pretensions?"

"Shall I be plain with you, Sir?" said Elfrida.

"O, I entreat it as a favor," said Ellison.

"Your attachment to me, Sir," said Elfrida, "I do conceive to proceed from opposition."

"Opposition! Miss Elfrida; take care, Madam, take care. Opposition! to whom? to what?"

"To the wishes of the woman before you. You know our tempers and our sentiments are widely different; you have merit, no doubt, it is my misfortune not to be able to do it justice."

"And why, Madam?" cried he, "Why?"

"I will tell you, Sir."

"You need not trouble yourself," said Ellison,

Ellison, "I know already, 'tis Wilmot, the artful Wilmot."

"Mr. Wilmot," returned she, "is beyond the utmost reachings of your scorn, nor shall I feel the stroke."

"A mere Proteus," continued Ellison, "who to come at your fortune, could lick the foot that spurns, could weep and smile, and creep and look such pity-moving things, to please and captivate you;" he paused.

"Proceed, Sir," said Elfrida, "upon this subject, I wish not to interrupt you; fill up the measure of your recommendations to me, by the illiberality of your sentiments, the venom of your sarcasms; and then assure yourself of Elfrida's hand, by her passive alienation of her rights, as an individual, to do you pleasure."

"And are these the moments given us by our indulgent relations? this our tender interview?"

"The color of our conversation," said Elfrida, "is all your own; I had resolved to devote myself, without complaint, to

gratify the ambition of my friends ; but it was so new to me to have an awful change of condition before me, that if you, Sir, had meant me kindly, you would much rather have soothed than terrified ; you would have tried to win not to insult my heart. Wilmot, for the last time I mention him, if you retract not your intentions, deserves, and ever shall enjoy my friendship, my esteem, my gratitude ; nor will I marry even you, Sir, let the consequence be what it may, if you again strike at the object of those rational, just, and honest susceptibilities. You know we were brought up together, like a brother, he was dear to me, like a brother he saved me from your lively frolics, how—”

“ O Elfrida !” said Ellifon.

“ I have not a thought of him I am ashamed to avow ; my heart may, as you suspect, be touched, but my principles are untainted ; I would not marry him were he blessed, as you are, with fortune, with all this declared approbation, without the full and perfect consent of my father and mother,
and

and, if you *can* make choice of a woman, whose affections you doubt, and whose good opinion you do not seem desirous of cultivating, you will learn to judge what sacred notions I entertain of filial duty and filial tenderness, by what I can do for their happiness, where you are concerned; and you would do well, that sincerity might dwell in my heart, and veracity on my lips, to wait till time and your generous treatment might enable me to tell you what you was to me without offending your ear."

"How austere! how commanding your manner is!" said Ellifon, "but, as I cannot live without you, I will accord to your terms; it shall be my endeavor to soften, to win upon your sensibility; but you will be uniformly good, nor deny me the satisfaction of hearing your favorable thoughts of me, so soon as I am happy enough to awaken such in your bosom."

"I will only, Mr. Ellifon," said Elfrida, "make one observation; you say you cannot exist *without* me, and thus, for your own felicity, become unmindful of my claim

claims to consideration. Suppose I was to tell you I could not exist *with* you; are not the laws of God and man as much my defence as they are yours? you cannot conquer your feelings, I have as little power over mine; you look upon the ceremony that would unite us, with delight, I with horror; you promise yourself you shall rejoice to live with me, I hope for peace only in the grave; and, *now* Sir, supported as you are by my relations, you have the advantage of me; but remember, if you see my health decline, my spirits sink into dejection, my dissolution drawing near, remember you are not deceived, not even self-deceived. My mind, you know, is my own; and though my conduct must be such, out of respect to myself, as cannot dishonor you; in my kingdom, the kingdom of my mind, I shall be free; for beyond this unhappy person, in a peculiar manner unhappy, I will say it, because pleasing to you. —”

“Perdition, torture,” cried Ellifon, “yet you *shall* be mine, and I will love you,
adore

adore you, in spite of all your insulting cruelty."

"Beyond my person you will have no power; and here I must beg our first conference may terminate. Make what report of me you think proper."

Ellison was too wise ever to complain of what passed between Elfrida and Wilmot, for in the first place he was not without his fears, as the boy was a great favorite with the Lady Mistress of Arcadia, that some romantic whim, if she knew the true state of affairs, might operate in his favor; and, in the second, it would have been very unreasonable to have told such a tale after declaring his passion, and shewn himself capable of so unknighly an act, as *knowingly* to take a fair lady's hand by violence, an act so contrary to all the rules of chivalry as to endanger his reputation at all points; for no sooner did this young spark dip into his eventful history, than he was aware how far his mother-in-law was advanced upon heroic ground, and therefore greatly preferred the safe to the hazardous mode of conduct, namely,

namely, smiling in the midst of bitterness and wrath, to discharging any part of it, which would recoil, perhaps, upon his own head.

Having taken a turn or two about the saloon to collect himself, and set his features for the business of the day, "Let me, Madam," said he, to Elfrida, "have the honor of leading you to our relations."

Elfrida again started, sighed, looked up to heaven, then gave him her hand, as he had held his out during the reluctance she had shewn, and he assuming an air of the utmost satisfaction, was of course congratulated by his friends upon his approaching nuptials; for, in proportion to Elfrida's disinclination to become his wife, he seemed to confirm himself in the resolution of being her husband.

A JOURNEY.

Elfrida requested to change her apartment to a wing of the house, which had only
a view

a view of the distant hills; the lawn, the canal, the sea, she could not endure to behold, for Wilmot and those were inseparable objects.

She was also spared, at her earnest petition, every mention of the preparations, as she called them, for sacrifice, except the execution of the marriage-articles, when Ellison, with the importance of an approved lover, supported her and guided her hand, or her name would not have been legible.

The night preceding the great day she wished to have passed with Mrs. Jenkins, but recollecting the duties of her approaching character, and the honor and delicacy she ought to observe, she did not suffer herself to breathe that wish; she resolved to turn every soft remembrance of Wilmot out of her heart, and, for the purpose of informing herself clearly of such as she must particularly guard against, her mind took a general review of every thought concerning him, and she was found by the good woman, at the hour she was ordered to attend her, stupified

stupified with grief, and only thrown upon the bed, without being undressed, a circumstance to which she never once adverted, until Hannah's surprize pointed it out.

She asked for a few lavender-drops upon a bit of sugar, took a dish of tea which was brought her, and suffered herself to be adorned, only taking care to seat herself far out of the view of her dressing-glass, and all pale and trembling was conducted by the exulting bridegroom to the church, where a stranger performed the ceremony, Hannah standing behind her with a bottle of hartshorn and silently weeping; this was Ellison's thought, though he did not assign his reasons for it, for he was fearful the sight of Wilmot's father would have thrown his lovely, though mourning, bride, into such distress, as would have revealed all that he wished to conceal.

The ceremony over, she hastily pressed forward, to hide herself in the carriage, and sought to be alone.

But

But Ellifon, now fure of her, would not leave her. "My beloved Elfrida," faid he, "forgive the man that has thus become your husband, and compassionate his diftracted ftate of mind; to lofe you he was not equal to, but if a life of tendernefs, of friendship, of adoration, can atone for his conduct, you fhall never look back to this day with regret. Pity, pardon and endure me in your fight, or banifh me until you can extend to me your unreluctant hand. I will henceforth be whatever you are pleafed to make me; but defer not beyond the abfolutely neceffary time to reconcile yourfelf to my company and converfation; defer not to give happinefs to your father and mother; the Ellifon you have known me fhall this day expire; I will be gentle, tender, good; and, O Elfrida, let not the unconquerable affection your manifold beauties infpired me with, be our deftruction; but pardon your lover, and pity and receive your husband."

She held out her hand to him. "We are now," faid ſhe, "the fon and daughter of
Captain

Captain and Mrs. Overbury, our happiness will be theirs. I have much to be forgiven by you; but you will, I dare hope from your behavior at this instant, insinuate yourself into my voluntary, as you have obtained my sanctified attachment; let this day then change us both. I shall always remember my plighted faith is your's, and that you have a right to regulate my actions. When do we set off for Bath?"

"In a few hours," said Ellifon, and then kneeling before her; "Woman of my heart," said he, "relieve me from the apprehensions which some of your words have left upon my mind; do not weep, or hate me in your private moments, but recover your enchanting cheerfulness, and live, if not for me, for your beloved father and mother."

She again held out her hand to him, begged he would rise, and rejoin the company.

Ellifon, in order to surprize her agreeably, asked Hannah's husband to let her accompany them to London; "We will restore her

her to you," said he, "as soon as we can part with her."

Hannah was wild with pleasure; she ran, though forbidden, into Elfrida's chamber; and said, "I shall see Captain and Mrs. Overbury, as well as you, Madam; the Mr. Ellifon I once hated, has had the goodness to propose my going up with you, and Richard is willing to spare me, and I shall travel in the coach with you, and methought Mr. Ellifon looked quite handsome when he told me so."

Elfrida felt this mark of kindness and attention; she arose, and, for the first time, walked to her toilet. "I look very pale, Hannah," said she, "but I have passed, you know, through a solemn ceremony. Mr. Ellifon has greatly obliged me by procuring me your attendance, and I will go and thank him." She went to the door, then stopped, "No," said she, "I will wait his coming to me; I think he will not forget to lead me to his relations."

Ellifon presented himself. "Mrs. Jenkins here," said he, "that is contrary to agreement;

ment; I intended, my Elfrida, to have given you a pleasing and unexpected token of my remembrance of you, by producing her when we came to set off, but I see there was no preventing her betraying me."

"I am not insensible," said Elfrida, "of your kindness, and it is with pleasure I acknowledge you have, Sir, this day, laid me under an obligation to you."

Ellison called himself the happiest of men, but ventured not even to kiss Elfrida's hand, for fear of discomposing her.

This incident had a visible good effect upon her spirits; she was determined to see all the merit of it, but an unlucky recollection of what Wilmot was accustomed to do for her, not to *atone* for his faults, but separately and disinterestedly to promote her felicity, threw her into great distress.

"Yet, O why did he not," said her heart, "leave my father and mother to exert their authority over me, and make me miserable without uniting with them, in this only instance of unkindness, against my everlasting

peace

peace; but the action was not his own; he did it, I am persuaded, at the request of those who conceived they had a right to destroy me."

Mr. and Mrs. Ellifon were to accompany them to Bath, but, not to part man and wife, they said, or disappoint the wishes of the worthy Mrs. Jenkins, they went in their chaise, Ellifon, Elfrida, and this humble friend in their coach.

Elfrida shut her eyes until they had cleared the park-wall, and then gave one sigh to the lost pleasure of Arcadia, and bent her mind to be amused with new objects; they arrived safe at Bath, where, having staid a couple of days, they left their father and mother Ellifon in that city, and pursued their journey to London.

Mrs. Ellifon had informed Captain Overbury when the nuptial-day was fixed, nor did Hannah fail to communicate the same intelligence to Wilmot. "Your letter," said she, "cost Miss Elfrida many tears, but comfort yourself the best you can, for if she might have chose, the lot would surely have

have fallen upon Jonas; you understand me, Sir, and will forgive my plain way of writing; but what of that, the finest pens can only tell you truths in finer words, but it is all the same at last; and the more is the pity that I have no better news for you."

Wilmot flew to Mrs. Overbury; "Behold, Madam," said he, giving her Hannah's letter, "the crisis of my melancholy destiny is arrived; your Elfrida will to-morrow be Ellison's Elfrida; restore me my precious deposit, and let me try what winds and waves can do to sooth my wretchedness."

"Alas, my noble minded young friend, I am now going to lose your esteem, deservedly to lose it; my husband surprised me contemplating the features of my beloved child; he has got possession of our Elfrida's performance, and, forgetting the innocence of the heart that dictated the motto, says, it would be dishonorable to her character, for it to be in any body's possession but her own."

Wilmot

Wilmot smote his forehead; "I will not complain, Madam," said he, "I will not wound the mind I respect, but you have done me an irreparable injury, you have, unintentionally, destroyed me; may your Elfrida's presence, nevertheless, make you forget him, that forgot himself to oblige you."

My husband is here," said Mrs. Overbury, "and I will venture to ask him to restore it, your conduct towards us merits some high reward, and perhaps change of circumstances may give birth to change of opinion. Moderate your distress, my dear Wilmot, let him not see the utmost value you hold it in."

Captain Overbury shook him by the hand; but with all his firmness was shocked at his altered countenance; he sat down, endeavored to start uninteresting subjects; but his heart was touched, and he sincerely pitied the victim of his pride and ambition.

These returns of the Lieutenant's mind to its natural bent, he always labored hard

to restrain and correct, but truth and humanity would force their way through all the bars which false prudence and resolution could erect.

The most delightful scenes of happiness had been enjoyed by him, in the character of a favored lover, an affectionate husband, and a blessed father; his fire-side had known both social, domestic and paternal pleasures, though plenty had not presided at his table, or elegance marked his footsteps.

“We have a request to make you, my dear,” said Mrs. Overbury, “with all submission, nevertheless, to your better judgment. Different age gives a different color to our actions; a present from our womanly Elfrida, would ill become her to bestow, and could not with honor be asked, even, perhaps, by the friend of her youth; but the picture this young Gentleman intrusted with me, was an infant performance and an infant gift; the offering, I may say, of infant gratitude. Can it not then, with propriety, be restored to him? Methinks I should blush to know my Elfrida had ever committed

ted an action that her father must correct the delicacy of."

"Young Gentleman," said the Lieutenant, "do not be the less in love with virtue, because she may seem to wear a forbidding brow; I with-held not the picture from caprice, but from a nice, however possibly, mistaken sense of honor; I know the purity of my child's heart, and the nature of your infant friendship; be it therefore as you wish, but we must date the æra of its presentation, to put it out of the power of time, chance, or malice, to give it an ill coloring."

"We will do more, my dear Sir," said Wilmot, "than merely dating it, we will erase the precious motto by filling up the border; the service I rendered your Elfrida merits no such flattering testimony; and I would guard against every shadow of misconstruction as tenderly as her own father the miniature, my dear Sir, is all I wish to be possessed of."

"It shall be yours," said the Lieutenant, "I find you may be trusted; and may happy days and years await you, my good young

Gentleman, for your heart is certainly in the right place."

Wilmot dipped a brush in some colors Mrs. Overbury helped him to at his repeated request. "I should be miserable," said he, "if I enjoyed a gratification at the expense of a moment's pain to the father and mother of Miss Overbury, or the remotest possibility of endangering her spotless fame; in this state, Sir, having totally expunged the letters, none will know the value of this portrait, but the unhappy youth who will never part with it more to the dearest friend on earth."

"What do you do with yourself to-morrow?" said Mr. Overbury at parting, "will you give us your company?"

"Ah, Sir!" said Wilmot.

"It shall be so," said the Lieutenant, pressing his hand, "for henceforth you shall be my Wilmot."

Wilmot rushed out to conceal his emotions, and mistaking his way home, though a fine moon-light night, wandered for hours oppressed with his own thoughts; at length, said

said he, I have lost the daughter and gained the mother; Elfrida and I shall then, surely, be relations, of a kind that will suit her delicate situation; she shall be my sister, my sister given by her father to Ellison; and may she be happy, however wretched that event must render me."

Mrs. Overbury said many kind and soothing things to Wilmot, endeavored to keep him in conversation or employment the whole day, and promised him her unalterable friendship; "You shall write to me" said she, "and tell me all your destinations, the improvement of your fortune, your sensible remarks; indeed, Mr. Wilmot, it is in your power to afford me great entertainment."

Wilmot did his best to appear happy, but looked at his watch several different times, said the weather was fine, and betrayed a consciousness of that day's transaction, and when no longer able to contain himself, "Elfrida Overbury," said he, "is no more, and I must teach myself to revere Mrs. Ellison."

He left them at eleven in the evening, and the next morning was in a high fever, a circumstance the Lieutenant alone discovered by calling at his lodgings, for Wilmot had forbid their being made acquainted with it.

Mrs. Overbury flew to see him, and, kneeling by his bed-side, intreated him to live for her sake. "I shall for ever be unhappy, Wilmot," said she, "if you do not recover; let not your dear friend's marriage take place under such frightful auspices as the death of a youth so deservedly beloved; compose your mind, or, if it will relieve you, make my breast the repository of your sorrows. I know how insensibly your attachment has stolen upon you, grown with your growth and strengthened with your strength; but you have found a sister without losing a friend; for henceforth I will consider you as my own child; for my peace sake then, my tranquillity, live, my Wilmot live, and be to me a son."

Wilmot wished to oblige her, but his fever was violent, and the combat between
that

that and his constitution hard fought, the latter was, however, successful, and he was again able to walk out, and Mrs. Overbury told him, that, if he wished it, he should bid her Elfrida adieu before he left England.

A MEETING.

Mr. and Mrs. Ellifon at length arrived in London, and never was meeting more tender or touching than that between the Captain, Mrs. Overbury and their lovely child, who almost even forgot Wilmot, in the rapture of her dear father and mother; and Ellifon behaved very well.

Hannah blubbered out her joy, but could not forbear thinking how much happier the scene would have been, if Wilmot, instead of Ellifon, had married Elfrida.

Mrs. Overbury, when they became a little composed, thought Elfrida much altered, the vivacity of her countenance was gone, and her fine bloom faded, but the

difference of infancy and youth might have occasioned the change, and she sought not to convince her heart of the painful truth.

Thus she pined in thought, and Elfrida exerted herself to the utmost to appear tranquil.

“But my dear mother,” said she, “how can I, when I look upon you, but lament the days, the years of supreme delight we have lost by our separation? had your Elfrida been permitted to grow up under your own eye, she would not have been mistress of so many, what the world calls elegant accomplishments, indeed, but then she would have been rich in content, and all her little powers would have been exercised to please you; and, O, Madam,” added she, in a half whisper, “if you knew all, I deserve to have been poor, for the best talents heaven has bestowed upon me, are such as fit me for a life of resignation, of frugality, of obscurity; I am thrown out of my track, and nature has sustained a force, by making me a fine lady.

Mrs.

Mrs. Overbury, who felt every word she uttered, pressed her hand; "Life of my life," said she, "if it had depended upon my choice we had never been separated."

Ellison expressed a wish that they might be all one family, but the Lieutenant would not quit his old lodgings, and only begged to be indulged with as much of Elfrida's company as possible.

"My dear Sir," said Ellison, "all you have to fear from us is, that we shall oppress you with our kindness, if you can call it kind in us to devote a large portion of our time to you; I met you with sentiments of esteem and respect, but I shall take my leave with the warmest affection, the affection of a son."

Mr. Overbury endeavored to persuade himself he was quite pleased and quite happy, but the sight of Hannah reviving some recollections of the smarting heart under tender disappointments, he sighed and trembled for his Elfrida.

“What a blessed child ours is!” said he to his wife, “what a countenance! she would not disgrace the highest situation; they have fortune sufficient, however, and I do believe Ellifon will deserve her.”

“Heaven grant it,” replied Mrs. Overbury, “he is very attentive to our child, and very polite to us, but I wish his heart may be in his conduct; I do not take upon me to be an infallible translator of looks, but if I am not very greatly deceived, Ellifon is one of those who are subject to sudden and violent changes of humor, and can hate to-morrow what he doated upon to day.”

“What an alarming and ungenerous picture,” said Mr. Overbury, “have you drawn of a young fellow you have seen but for a few hours; if Elfrida is not herself the cause—”

“How, my dear,” exclaimed Mrs. Overbury, “would you insinuate that our Elfrida—”

“Do understand me,” said Mr. Overbury, “I mean not that our child is capable of departing from the *great outline* of the duties

to duties to which she has bound herself to adhere, but there are a thousand *little interesting touches* of *critical colorings*, that either *charm* or *hurt* the mind, for they operate in extremes, which obedience is too cold to dictate, and which love is too warm not to demand; we will, however, hope the best, nor anticipate sorrow, it is both foolish and impious."

Ellison entered with avidity into the dissipation of the metropolis, was profuse in adorning his wife, took her to court, to every place of polite resort, and was flattered beyond measure by the admiration and envy her presence excited.

A man of fashion formed an intimacy with him, and drew him often from home; Ellifrida was not pained by his absence, and the pleasure of her company made the Lieutenant for a time unmindful of the consequence.

Hannah sought an opportunity of conversing with Mrs. Overbury alone, to open her whole heart to her; for though Mrs. Ellison appeared quite satisfied with every thing,

thing, she was persuaded of the contrary, for Ellifon's ill-nature would sometimes shew itself in his face, to let you know, Hannah would say to herself, that it was alive in his heart; and above all things it appeared a bad sign to her of Elfrida's happiness, that she never pronounced the name of the worthy Mr. Wilmot, and had instructed her not to mention it upon any occasion. Mr. Overbury penetrated her design, and, in some degree, her motives, and cautioned his wife, as she valued her own peace, or his satisfaction, to decline every private interview; hence Mrs. Jenkins found herself constantly disappointed in her attempts.

Wilmot having solicited and obtained both his uncle's and his father's consent to go to India, was honored, through the interest of the former, with a most important commission, relative to the recovery of immense wealth, buried and scattered in various parts of the scene of warfare and carnage in the Eastern world, which promised to lead to great advantage.

His

His father's large family induced him to part unreluctantly with this worthy son, on whom he could only bestow his good wishes for his future advancement; and his uncle having married a woman who was not fond, she said, of relations living with man and wife, made him a handsome present to fit him out, and from family considerations rejoiced in his departure.

The young Gentleman was, however, so long in compleating his necessary preparations, that he was no stranger to the giddy and improper connexions which Ellifon had made, and, for Elfrida's sake, lamented the discovery.

He had engaged to see Mrs. Overbury before he embarked, but learning that Elfrida almost lived with her father and mother, he would not presume to wait upon them but by their own appointment, he accordingly wrote to them to grant him such appointment, and reminded them of the promise which they had made him, of prevailing upon their daughter to permit him to bid her adieu.

This

This note was received by Mrs. Overbury when her daughter and she were alone.

Elfrida was unspeakably distressed, "O my dearest mother," said she, "spare me the rencounter; my heart is right, but I could not answer for appearances; my infant attachment is deeply rooted; my husband would not approve of my seeing him, and I will confess myself unequal to the task."

The Lieutenant and his wife having consulted together, it was resolved the former should introduce the subject of Wilmot's approaching departure, and his request to take leave of Mrs. Ellifon, when tête-a-tête with his son.

Ellifon commended the young man's spirit and conduct. "There is meaning, my dear Sir, in this," said he, "he that has his fortune to make, has no other card to depend upon than changing the mild climate of Britain for the burning suns of the golden world. Will he not call upon us before he goes?"

"It

"It is his wish," said Mr. Overbury, "to bid our daughter farewell; and you, I dare believe, can have no objection."

"How Sir!" said Ellison, "you do not take me, I hope for an Italian husband? Our Elfrida shall ever be mistress of herself upon these occasions. I know her well, purity is the inner garment of her soul; you will do me the justice to bear witness, the overture for Wilmot's visiting us, came from me, though I forget not, Captain Overbury, there was a time when Elfrida called him her *own* Wilmot, but I also remember she is now my wife."

There was a mixture of generosity and pride, which the Lieutenant could not but perceive in this speech; nor was his good opinion of his son-in-law much increased when he found him so indelicate as to rally her at dinner upon her favorite's quitting his native country.

"We shall have him return a Nabob upon us," said he, "many young fellows, who go out adventurers, as I presume is the case with our young friend, have returned
rolling

rolling in wealth. I wish him the treasures of the East, to make him amends for his loss of the bright gem my better destiny has made me master of; he knows its value, and would, I believe, exchange both Indies for it; but who can tell what may be in the chapter of probabilities for him; my mortality may give him an opportunity in his *nabobship*, to become a candidate for the hand I have robbed him of."

Elfrida was wounded; every tender scene of her infancy was revived in her memory; she beheld Wilmot in the boat with her, she sighed, and with difficulty forbore giving a tear to the recollection.

Observing they were all silent, Mr. Elifson, with the ease he had acquired from the good company he daily mixed with, turned to Captain Overbury, "Will you have the goodness, Sir, to invite him? I am too happy a man to wish to see him; we ought to feel for our friends upon all these occasions. Mrs. Overbury will be so kind as to assist her daughter in receiving him; tell him of my engagement, that he

may

may not conceive himself slighted, and assure him of my wishes for his prosperity;" so saying, he carelessly, but politely bowed, and went out, Mr. Overbury following him.

"I am wretched," said Mrs. Overbury, "my beloved Elfrida, I am most wretched to see—"

"Dear Madam," said Elfrida, "see only what will give you pleasure; am I not the rich Elfrida? have I not a carriage, a set of servants; an elegantly furnished wardrobe? how then can I be unhappy? the humble young Gentleman, indeed, that solicits half an hour's conversation with us, will not be dazzled by what I possess; but will, I much rather fear, discover the true state of the owner's heart. But he must come, my dear mother," said she, "let it cost my sensibility what it may; the wife of Mr. Ellison shall not shew she is not able to wish an old acquaintance well, an acquaintance, particularly, who is about to leave the kingdom; you will then be so kind, as my husband

husband mentioned, to assist me in entertaining him."

"Well, fortify yourself my love," said Mrs. Overbury, "for my mind tells me your father will bring him to us, his lodging is not far distant."

"I have not a thought of him," said Elfrida, "that might not be laid naked and open before you; but I dread violating the forms of society; my heart was so long ignorant of the distinctions of wisdom, caution, or whatever other devised rule, that I have said a thousand things to Mr. Wilmot, which nothing but the innocence of my intention could excuse; but I blush not for the past, what innocence sanctified modesty cannot condemn, and Mr. Wilmot is well acquainted with the mind which dictated them; all that will be awkward to me is, the kind of behavior I must put on; for am I not Mr. Ellifon's wife? You and my father, because I entreated not to marry Mr. Ellifon, supposed I had a prepossession; my friendship for Mr. Wilmot, under any other eye, would have constituted one of the greatest

greatest happinesses of my life: the severe stroke was, being given to the enemy of my deliverer; but if you please, my dear mother, we will talk no more of it."

Mrs. Overbury was right in her conjectures; the Lieutenant went immediately to Wilmot's lodgings; he wished the meeting over, and the young man out of the kingdom, persuading himself that change of scene would give him tranquility.

"Come, my boy," said he to Wilmot, "I have promised Elfrida and my wife to bring you to tea with them, and I must not go without you."

Wilmot was overwhelmed with confusion; he, however, caught his hat hastily up, and, walking out, made no reply, and followed the Lieutenant to his lodgings.

Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida rose to receive him, each holding out a hand to bid him welcome; he kissed that of Mrs. Overbury, but only bowed upon Mrs. Ellison's, and in a hurry to speak the purport of his visit, he told them he should sail in a few days.

"You

"You will be kind enough to let us hear from you," said Mrs. Overbury, "our friendship must not be extinguished by distance of situation; you may meet with many that are better able to promote your advantage in life, but will not find sincere hearts towards you than in the present company."

The alternate changes of Wilmot's complexion betrayed the agitation of his mind.

"A letter, Madam," said he to Mrs. Overbury, "from such a friend as you, would be considered by me, in India, as an intercourse with the blessed spirits of Elysium; you reconcile me to—to—to my departure from my native country; and who shall say Edmund Wilmot is an unhappy man, when he enjoys the esteem of this most respected circle?"

"But, Madam," said he to Elfrida, "I have a petition to offer, I think you will not deny me; I shall once more visit my father (this was a sudden thought of Wilmot's) and there is an old acquaintance of mine in Arcadia, that would not be disinclined

lined to make a voyage with me, if you will permit it."

Captain and Mrs. Overbury looked at each other.

"I shall be happy, Sir," said Elfrida, "to restore your little favorite to you, as my residence at Arcadia will be uncertain; and it cannot be in tenderer hands than your's. Pretty creature! I will, my dear Sir," said she, addressing the Lieutenant, "tell you the little history of this bird, when Mr. Wilmot takes leave of us. If it could speak," turning to Wilmot, "you would hear many tales of the lessons of gratitude I have given it towards you; an obligation, such as a life preserved, cannot be had in too lively remembrance. I will give orders it shall be delivered to you on demand."

"I thank you, Madam," said Wilmot, "I have not now another affair to settle;" and, forgetting he was invited to tea, was rising to go.

"Pray, young Gentleman," said the Lieutenant, "resume your seat; you are not tired of our company, I hope, already; I thought

thought you were to give us the whole afternoon."

Wilmot bowed and sat down.

Mrs. Ellifon had dressed herself, though suitable to the character of Ellifon's wife, yet in such a manner as least set off her figure or features; but poor Wilmot, with all this kindness, was unable to be collected; his eyes were evermore upon the door, and he seemed to apprehend some disagreeable interruption.

The truth was, he knew not how Ellifon might be disposed to treat him, and he dreaded encountering him, lest he should not be sufficiently upon his guard, if he received any trying provocation.

The Lieutenant at length, out of pure compassion, said, "Come, Wilmot, you are ill; I will go read the papers."

Wilmot jumped up, bowed, attempted unsuccessfully to speak, bowed again and hastened out of the parlor.

The Lieutenant, seeming not to perceive his disorder, did all in his power to dissipate it, but finding he could not recover himself

wilhe

wished him a good night. "Good night," said Wilmot, wringing his hand; "alas! we never meet again."

Hannah, however, having informed herself of his lodgings, was with him in the morning before he could set off. She wept over him, kissed him, and wept again. "Never shall I see such another young Gentleman," said she, "you are the flower of goodness and the pattern of excellence; I would have been content to die myself if that could have made you happy."

"My good friend," said Wilmot, "tear not open the half-healed wounds of my heart; the man that has nothing to reproach himself with, in the midst of even cruel distress, has a firm and constant support; we shall all meet again, and, I trust, see happier days."

"Ah, mercy upon us," said Hannah, "I wish I could think so, but those vile Blacks beyond sea, suppose they were to poison you; surely, Mr. Wilmot, if they should, you would not come and terrify one, because one—"

Wilmot

Wilmot smiled. "Set your mind at rest," said he, "Mrs. Jenkins; my ghost shall not disturb you; you should be above such idle fears; for if the living were but as harmless as the dead, it would be a happy world."

"But for all that," said Hannah, "if I was to see any one in a white sheet, bleeding, and the like of that, I should conclude it was you come to tell me you were murdered; or was I to meet any one by dusk with a bowl in their hand, I should swear it was you that had died by poison. Well, well," continued Hannah, "it is a folly to talk, but if you are only as prosperous as you are good, you may hold up your head by-and-by with the proudest he in the world; and don't be cast down, Mr. Wilmot, for God is above the devil yet, and there is no knowing who may live or who may die; and many a fair lady has had the man for her second husband, she could not get for her first; and—"

Wilmot interrupted her. "It is all over with me, my dear Mrs. Jenkins, I cannot

not hear you talk thus; where Miss Overbury was concerned it was quite different, but Mrs. Ellifon is too sacred a character to be mentioned lightly; but leave me, Mrs. Jenkins, we must part."

Hannah burst again into tears, knelt down to bless him, and he was compelled to break from her, and leave her to recover herself how she could, setting off immediately for Arcadia, where his chief and almost only business was the pigeon, for his family did not require a personal adieu.

Elfrida perceived Hannah had been weeping, her heart told her the cause, and she studiously avoided every word that might lead to an avowal of it; but Ellifon, who let no opportunity escape him of tormenting, said, "What then your favorite is gone, for ever gone, Mrs. Jenkins, (affecting to lament) and you are so kind as to whimper and to whine?"

"Aye, aye," said Hannah, "a hard heart, as the world goes, is a great blessing, but those who feel not the sorrows of others

will find themselves, when their distressful hour comes, without pity."

"Has your Jenkins meaning, Elfrida, in what she says," demanded Ellifon, with an air of indolence, "does she, think you, set up for a small prophet, and, screech-owl like, attempt to warn me of the evil to come; or is it merely the overflowings of her fondness for the Arcadian youth, so unhappily driven, by disappointed love, from his native land?"

Captain Overbury presented himself, and never more seasonably, for Elfrida was tortured by her husband's humor, and wholly at a loss for a reply.

She instantly took alarm at her father's turn of countenance, "What has happened, Sir," said she, "my dear mother—"

"Is well, my love;" said the Lieutenant.

"Wilmot," said Ellifon, I hope *our* Wilmot has not acted the part of the infatuated Werter, and—"

The Lieutenant looked angry; "No, Sir," said he, "Mr. Wilmot's conduct has uniformly

formly been that of a man of honor, a gentleman, and, though it may perhaps shock a refined ear, a Christian ; I see by your cast of features, Sir, you are ready with a smart reply, but I have news for you that requires your most serious attention. Elfrida, my love, Mrs. Ellifon is no more ;” Elfrida was shocked, and Mr. Ellifon looked grave ; “and, young Gentleman,” said the Lieutenant, “you have now but one father.” Ellifon stared.

“Explain yourself, dear Sir,” said Elfrida, “tell us all.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Ellifon were lost,” said the Lieutenant, “in crossing the ferry, by some unfortunate accident, on their return home, and you are now sole master of yourself and fortune.”

Elfrida shed tears of compassion for the fate of a woman, who had nevertheless been the worst foe to her peace, and Ellifon pretended to walk the room in great discomposure ; but the words, you are now master of yourself and fortune, had struck him, and

he enjoyed more pleasure from them, than he felt grief at the dreadful catastrophe.

Hannah bellowed at the news, telling Mrs. Ellifson she would never sleep in the dark again, if she went without her dinner to buy a candle; for why, she should expect to see them drawing her curtains. But only think, Madam," continued she, "how Providence orders things; this couple thought they had done for themselves for ever, when they had forced you to marry, and behold that very marriage has cost them their lives, as one may say, for no other business would have drawn them, at this season of the year, across the ferry. Well, well, it is wonderful to see how good comes out of evil, and evil out of good, from one end of our days to the other."

Wilmot's mind was deranged by this melancholy incident; had it pleased Heaven to have taken them sooner; he, however, reprobated the idea, took his pigeon under his care, which Ellifson had been so malicious, only because it was his gift, and beloved by Elfrida, to turn out to famine or disaster,

disaster, about five minutes before he left Arcadia, accompanied by his bride. Chance restored it, however, to his protection, and having settled the consequences of a little adventure he met with, when in pursuit of the lost bird, the particulars of which will in due time and place be laid before our readers, he departed for India.

A PROVOCATION.

It was now debated in full council how Ellifon should proceed, but the dissipations of London, and the pleasures of high life, having taken fast hold of his mind, he besought the Lieutenant and his wife to go down to Arcadia, and settle all his affairs. "Do Sir," said Elfrida, "my dear father, if you have no very particular objection, for it would be a distressing scene to me now."

Ellifon looked at her significantly, and if he had not been restrained by the Lieutenant's presence, would have mentioned

Wilmot's name, notwithstanding, in his situation, decency required that his wit should be unexercised.

The Lieutenant having turned the prospect in his mind, felt himself very much inclined to give into it; "It will," said he, "perhaps, remind the owner of that seat, of a man he once professed to love, and of a child that never offended him; and who knows the benefits such a *memento* may lead to?"

Mrs. Overbury was sorry to part from her Elfrida, but as Ellifon promised to follow them in a few weeks, they set off and soon reached their destined spot.

Their first care was to see the remains of the unfortunate Mr. and Mrs. Ellifon properly interred; their next to write an account of it to Mr. Cluwyd, with an offer of occupying or giving up the family-seat, as was most agreeable to his choice; and then to endeavor to make themselves as comfortable as they could be without their Elfrida's company.

The

The gardens and the park were quite new to them, for the former, as hath been repeatedly mentioned, were laid out, according to the whimsical taste of their temporary owner, in the pastoral stile, as she called it, and the latter was cut up into knick-knacks, as Hannah phrased it.

They found Parson Wilmot a very agreeable neighbor, and his wife a most worthy, though not brilliant woman; and, except the absence of their Elfrida, their tender concern for the fugitive Wilmot, and the uncertainty of what notice Mr. Cluwyd would deign to honor them with, they were quite happy.

Ellison, now free from restraint, set off with *eclat*, his wife had a black chair with three servants, in mourning, for her particular use; and he had his hunters, his stud, but above all the rest, from a passion he contracted for gaming, seemed to be in haste to run his race.

Elfrida was unconcerned for the future, and uninterested by the present; a life of parade fatigued and mortified her, and the

worst ill that threatened her was the loss of accommodations, which she could not regret, because she could not enjoy.

Her spirits were somewhat relieved at the musical assemblies; she felt herself at the fountain-head of harmony, and gave into many of these parties with some promise of amusement, and she even persuaded herself she had forgot Wilmot.

About three months after Mr. and Mrs. Ellison's death, she was surprized by the unexpected company of her husband at dinner, who had left her with the declaration of being engaged for the day.

He was kind to excess; called her an angel; "You have," said he, "Elfrida, as Mrs. Brookes expresses it, the soul as well as the outward form of beauty, I never yet beheld so intelligent a face, and then your mind;" continued he, "How little do I appear in my own eyes, when I contemplate your mind; if ever woman upon earth deserved to be happy, you are the woman; and yet, my love, happiness is denied you; the husband of your *obedience* has not requi-
sites

sites to make you happy ; his affection for you is wild, irregular, violent, while all the movements of your soul are gentle, correct, rational. O how unequal an union."

Elfrida was alarmed ; "What, Mr. Ellifon," said she, "can have suggested these reflections ; my heart you cannot see, but I think my conduct speaks you not unkindly. I am not of a turn to profess much, and, though my sincerity may be a blemish in the world's eye, I think my husband cannot be much hurt by it."

"By heaven," said Ellifon, "I meant not to complain ; even my most private thoughts approve you ; you are only too good, Elfrida, and I the unfortunate contrast to your merits."

"There is something so unusual," said Elfrida, "so—you will pardon me, unnecessary is this self-accusation, and I own it startles me ; if it is intended as an introduction to what you may conceive a mortifying piece of information, spare yourself, Sir, and come immediately to the point ; life is full of vicissitudes, and we are now launched
D upon

that great ocean, and must expect to be tempest-beaten."

"In three words then," said Ellifon, "I am undone, my connexions broken, my fame blasted, my provision gone, unless you could consent—"

"Name your wishes," said Elfrida, "and be assured I will accomplish them; your partiality for me has, I am well assured, run you into great expence; tell me how I shall contract myself, how retrieve your affectionate error, and you shall find me quick to save."

Ellifon's heart was honestly touched for the moment; "This goodness, Elfrida—such a wife to the man you did not choose. What, what injury has not been done to him that would have been your choice; I speak not now from narrow sentiments, or ill-natured suggestion, but generously, candidly, Elfrida, for most happy would he have been that could have obtained you; I will say, of yourself—"

"Human nature," said Elfrida, "is imperfect, therefore, of course, human happiness;

ness ; the great difference between us, Mr. Ellifon, I conceive to be our sex, for does not Addison say, there is a sex in the soul ? I am something softer I believe than you, and could support a stroke of misfortune, that affected only myself, with more resolution ; but to business, if you please ; tell me wherein I have the power to serve you."

"By robbing, by disinheriting yourself," said Ellifon, "I have, I will not conceal it, encumbered my estate, but the sale of one part would redeem the other."

"Sell it then," said she, "it demands not a moment's deliberation."

"But," returned Ellifon, "your cousin had your advantage so much at heart, that I am bound down to the hardest terms—"

"From which, I suppose," said Mrs. Ellifon, "I can release you ; make no delay then ; I will meet your purpose, not only half way, but to its fullest completion ; your cares that rest upon my power to remove, shall all be done away."

Ellifon was frantic with surprize and joy, and left her to acquaint his right honorable friend of her ready concurrence; nor did she fail to attend him to the Court of King's-Bench, which was then fitting, to alienate her dower, and enable him to do as he pleased with his whole estate; and, this point settled, we will, my Elfrida, said Ellifon, make a visit to the country.

The business, through all its combinations, was soon dispatched; and Ellifon, to give himself a short breathing-time, ordered a carriage to the door the next morning, and, accompanied by his wife and Mrs. Jenkins, who, from the visible change in his behavior, thought he was growing quite good, bid adieu to London.

But to the great felicity of Elfrida, instead of Arcadia-house, which she trembled at the thoughts of entering, the Lieutenant had fitted up the Grange-hall for their reception; Mrs. Cluwyd having written, in her husband's name, that they should be glad to have Cluwyd-park, alias Arcadia, vacated; as they would either occupy the premises themselves,

themselves, or provide a new tenant; and this without one word of recognition of the Lieutenant or his wife, and thus all his hopes respecting Mr. Cluwyd's awakened kindness fell to the ground.

Ellison looked surprized, nay displeased, at the change; "Was this necessary, my dear Sir," said he.

"Why, you will pardon me, young Gentleman," said the Lieutenant, "but Arcadia seemed to me a weight you could very well dispense with, as a town-residence is so much to your taste."

Elfrida mentioned not, even to her mother, the step she had taken respecting her jointure, but portioning out her time, devoted a large share of it to her pencil. "It was never, intended, my dear Madam," said she, "that we should live in idleness; and the body's exercise is the mind's health; this is a piece of philosophy I learned from Hannah, at a time when she appeared to me an oracle, do not then deny me the pleasure of being employed."

Mr.

Mr. Overbury and Ellifon spent their time in reading, superintending the improvements which the Captain had planned, and at back-gammon; and Mrs. Ellifon walked, read, and worked with her mother. Mr. Wilmot sometimes called upon them; but Ellifon shewing a strong disinclination to visiting him, they were scarcely upon speaking terms, and for weeks had no other neighbor.

At length it was announced that Cluwypark was going to be inhabited, and this report was soon followed by the arrival of Sir Walter Stephens (Mrs. Overbury's old lover) and his young wife, whom he begged leave to introduce at the Grange; and bespoke a friendly intercourse; "We were rivals once, Captain," said he, "but those days are so long since passed, I hope we shall now be upon a social footing." The Captain professed himself desirous to live in good neighborhood, and Mrs. Ellifon's mind felt neither pleasure nor pain from the incident.

Lady

Lady Stephens was in every sense of the word, a fine lady, fond of admiration, fond of frolic, and incapable of existing one moment without cards.

"Bless me," said Mrs. Ellison, "does this woman remember she is a rational being, to be thus *dying*, as Dr. Young calls it, of a *rage* to *live*. I am certain she and I shall not be much attached to each other."

Lady Stephens was quite diverted with the *naivete* of her young acquaintance, and promised to open a new world upon her knowledge. "Who, my dear mistaken Madam, beside yourself," asked she, "in this age, looks for happiness in the dull *routine* of family connexions? You shall be my pupil, and I will teach you what polite life is; I have all my good lessons ready for you in my library."

Elfrida was astonished to find herself furnished with books, as books of entertainment, that were only so many frightful portraits of human nature; men and women of spirit and *ton*, as it is called, were, in her
opinion,

opinion, only so many monsters in creation, destroying and destroyed by turns; and she could not forbear exclaiming, in the language of Juba, if knowledge of the world makes men perfidious, may Ella ever live in ignorance.

She now, however, no longer wondered at all the phænomena, as they appeared to her in her days of innocence; of fetters and chains upon the manners and expressions of the individual, or at the clamorous distinction of sex, which had so much disturbed her in Arcadia. "If male and female intercourse is merely," said she, "a scene of licentiousness and deceit; if, instead of being the brothers and friends of each other, they are the actual deceivers and betrayers, then indeed was it good policy to keep them at a distance, and give them unfavorable and apprehensive impressions of what is stiled love, but this is not nature, as Wilmot's heart and mine can bear testimony, it is the wicked art of a false and unfortunate education, and the baneful effect of unworthy example. Where piety is unknown, vice will dare to
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shew its head, and fashion authorize what principle must condemn; it is too late for me, however, to fear the infection, I will nevertheless shun it; it is good to be guarded at all points, where there is a possibility of assault, and the best security of a woman is, always, retreat."

Lady Stephens despised her neighbor from her heart, but was so well bred as to cover the sovereign contempt she entertained for her narrow and absurd notions, under a profusion of caresses; the beauty of Elfrida's form, though faded, was frequently her topic; "If she did but know her own powers," she would say, "what glorious mischief she might do; but she is both inanimate and incorrigible; I am not so blind but I can see what nature has done for her; she might sit for a Venus; and her understanding is brilliant, but the sentiments of her heart are home-spun, formal, vulgar; we may exalt the *goddes* of *propriety* as high as we please, and raise her a thousand altars, but *fancy*, the playful, the variable, I had almost said the fantastic, deity for me; but

Mrs.

Mrs. Ellifon is the counterpart of her mother, and this is what young women get by their duty and their filial regard, and their humdrum nonsense, to be unfitted for human society."

"Why do you not inspire her," said Sir Walter.

"I have done my best," replied the lady, "but she is a *non-electric* body, and the torch of Prometheus himself could not vivify her."

Lady Stephens by way of doing something to chase the *monster ennui* (as Mrs. Brookes happily phrases the wearisomeness of leisure) coquetted with Ellifon, "I protest," said she, "you are a fine fellow thrown away; what a different order of beings we are, who touch the tropics, to you who freeze under the poles; how do you pass your evenings at the Grange?"

"Come," said Ellifon, pleasantly enough, "you shall not rally me out of my happiness; such a wife as Elfrida cannot be a disagreeable companion; she plays elegantly, and sings enchantingly; I am not afraid of raising

raising your expectations too high, for you can have no notion what a daughter of harmony she is; but you shall hear her and judge for yourself; and then in the country, where one hopes for nothing beyond living *a le barbone*, it must be a very pleasing surprize to find one's self in Elysium."

"I grant, I grant you," said her ladyship, "very well hit off indeed, for your friends are so formal and so gentle, and so pious, and so plaintive, that the old ferry-boat was never better freighted, or the Elysian fields better peopled by any of Charon's labors. I adopt the idea, and will henceforth call your Grange, the imperial territories of Pluto, your canal Lethe, your *cara sposa* Antigone, your father Ulysses, your mother Penelope, and yourself the blooming Telemachus; but, you wicked wretch, do not take it into your head to prefer the character of the Trojan general, mistake me for Dido, and attempt to allure me into any of your really well enough recesses."

Here a general laugh of Ellison, Sir Walter, and her Ladyship, filled up a pause, that

that furnished the female orator with new images.

“Or, now I think of it,” said she, “Mrs. Ellifon is a pretty imitation of *Eve*; her taste for flowers, the extreme neatness of her favorite parterre; and then her walking forth at morn, so like our common mother, to prune her tender plants, clip their exuberance, and all those pretty &c. as we have them from Milton’s pen; with that divine compliment, I own not intolerably illapplied, Grace in her steps, heaven in her eyes, in every gesture dignity and love. In short, Ellifon, I will always acknowledge her to be the finest piece of still life I ever beheld.”

Such was Lady Stephens’ rhapsodical conversation; and she would frequently conclude with the question, “Will you dare go to town with us without her, and see what a pretty fellow we will soon make of you? your *air* is not at present *fashion*, your *look* *nonbalance*, or your *language ton*.”

Mrs. Ellifon and Mrs. Overbury walked over to the lodge, having been told Hannah

was

was suddenly taken ill, but it was no more than a violent head-ach, to which she was often subject.

They came quite unexpectedly, and found her at breakfast, with a boy about three years old standing by her, and a little girl about two seated in her lap, to whom, in *her* way, she was teaching good-manners. "And if," said she, as they approached the door unperceived by her, "the good ladies at the Grange should ever happen to take notice of you, be sure make your best curtsy, and you your best bow; and blessed will be the day if you can obtain their favor and friendship."

The Ladies entered the room. "We are glad to find you so well," said Mrs. Overbury (Hannah was now settled in a lodge that belonged to the Grange) "and in such good company; how came you by these little folks? are they nurse children?"

"Yes, Madam," replied Hannah, "and orphans; poor souls, their mother died of a broken heart, and the parish officers were going to seize them and their little effects, and

and so they were preserved, and they now live with me; and the boy is to have notions put into his head about going to sea, and the girl is to be brought up comfortably, without pride, and well-taken care of, without superfluity, and I am to teach her all I know (which, God help me, is little enough) until—until—But what a creature am I to run on at this rate, without asking you to sit down, or to do me the honor to eat a few strawberries of my own planting,” and away she ran to fetch them, without waiting a reply.

Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida looked at each other, and then at the children; “Pretty innocents, sweet prattlers, you shall come to the Grange,” said Mrs. Overbury, “and we will be acquainted.”

“But I like this one best,” said the boy, “she shall be my mamma; sister may take you.” Elfrida kissed him.

“What fine hair the little rogue has got,” said Mrs. Overbury, “why you are buried alive my dear, in the exuberance of your own locks. Put them on their best cloaths, Mrs. Jenkins, and send them up to us in
the

the afternoon, they will greatly entertain us."

"Who can these children be?" said Mrs. Overbury, as they returned home, "Hannah, by an artless *manœuvre*, I perceived evaded our enquiries. Orphans she says they are, and snatched by some happy chance from the hands of parish officers; but wherefore should we wish to enquire into this matter; they are innocent, let their origin be as unfortunate as it may, and their innocence will amuse us, whilst we in return may render ourselves serviceable to them."

"We have made a new acquaintance," said Mrs. Overbury to her husband and Ellifon, "in our morning's walk, and have engaged them to tea."

"I am sorry for it," said Ellifon, "for Lady Stephens will be here, and we must not hope to find any thing suited to the delicacy of her taste, at this distance from the metropolis."

"If innocence and infancy can charm her," said Mrs. Overbury, "we can give her a high feast."

"Infants,

“Infants, my dear Madam!” said Ellifon, “I believe she will think with me, that the nursery is the best place for children.”

“Unless we have your permission, Sir,” said Mrs. Overbury, hurt by his manner of replying, “to let them run upon the lawn, since you have objections to their company in Mr. Overbury’s study.”

“I don’t love to see children, Madam,” said Ellifon, “it is so like the Arcadia I was brought up in, unless I was so happy, indeed, to have a young family of my own.”

You both disappoint and mortify me,” said Mrs. Overbury, “but we will forbid their company; we shall have too many afternoons we can call our own, to offend you by our visitants, or your polite guest.”

“I will not remain long under his roof,” said the Lieutenant, “he has not a mind I can owe the shadow of an obligation to; and, as the world cannot know the services I have done him, in the improvement of his fortune, I shall be set down by-and-by for a dependent

a dependent upon his bounty. Overbury, in his old age, must not sink into such disgrace."

The bell rang at the gate; it was a servant from Sir Walter's; her Ladyship was a little indisposed, and *therefore* disinclined to come out, and begged the engagement might be reversed.

"We will be excused, said Mr. Overbury; "Elfrida, no doubt, will attend Mr. Elifon." Elfrida saw it was impossible, without declaring an aversion to their high-bred neighbors, to decline, and therefore retired to dress.

Hannah, having received no prohibition, entered the Grange-park, with a child in each hand, set off to the best advantage; but nature had done her part so completely, that drapery concealed many, without giving them one additional beauty.

Mrs. Overbury received them with the utmost kindness; but the boy was shy, and looked about as if he missed somebody; at length, "but where is t'other," said he, "for I like her best?"

The Lieutenant called him to him, and asked if he would be a foldier; the boy, struck with his countenance, began, without reply, to climb up his knee, when helping him, he whispered in the Lieutenant's ear, "I will be what you be."

"Then, Mrs. Jenkins," said Mr. Overbury, "we have got a little foldier; he must drink his Majesty's health, upon devoting himself to his service. Here my little fellow, what will you do with these two pieces of white money?" holding out two half-crowns to him.

"Do with them," said the boy, "why give them mamma to buy bread, for her, sister and daddy."

"Had you not better keep them for yourself?" said the Lieutenant.

"What," returned the boy, "when she gives me all!

"Gratitude! Infant gratitude!" said the Lieutenant, "how amiable! O what have those to answer for that could corrupt such a heart as that."

Ellifon

Ellifon, passing the study-window, was piqued to see these unknown little ones so abundantly caressed; he stopped and looked in; "I protest," said he, smiling maliciously, "they are like Wilmot; who knows but he may have thus multiplied the human face divine, for the good of his country?"

Hannah colored up. "They are no more Mr. Wilmot's than they are yours," said she, "nay, God forgive every one their sins—not so much, if the truth was known."

Ellifon laughed and walked on.

"I think that man," said Hannah, "has the cruellest heart I ever knew in my born days."

The Lieutenant smiled. "You surely, Mrs. Jenkins, forget Mr. Ellifon is my son, and Elfrida's husband."

"No, no, Sir," said Hannah, "I remember it but too well; and, since I must speak out, the children are—"

"Hold," said Mrs. Ellifon, who was wishing her father and mother a good afternoon; "we have no desire to pry into secrets; they are lovely children, and they

are parentless; and as such, deserve the countenance of benevolence."

"He shan't be my daddy," said the boy, "that looks cross; I don't like en—I wont love en—love you," throwing his arms about Mr. Overbury's neck."

"Dear child," said the Lieutenant, "your genuine caresses go to my heart, and from this moment I will never forsake you."

"And will you love me?" said the boy, "and get she to love me," pointing to Elfrida.

Mrs. Ellifon followed her husband, who, with a less favorable brow than she had ever encountered, handed her into her carriage.

He was fullenly silent.

Elfrida, for the innocent childrens' sake was alarmed; "You seem displeased," said she.

"I am provoked, Madam, to see the departure from character Mr. Overbury can be guilty of; caressing beggars' brats, and the offspring, perhaps of infamy."

The

"The children must be innocent," said Elfrida.

"Very well, Madam, I could expect no less from you, than a similitude of sentiment; there is a strong *family likeness* in the *minds* of all the Overburys."

"For heaven's sake, my good Mr. Ellifon," said Elfrida, "do not declare war against the most humane feelings upon earth; my father, at present, respects you, my mother remembers you are her son; you can give happiness, you can destroy it; for my peace sake, at least, spare the minds of those I love."

"What a pathos," returned Ellifon, "faith, Elfrida, it is a loss to the public that you was not obliged to tread the stage; what tearful eyes would you have caused! but, my dearest life, why plant this forcible artillery against a heart that is already your own—unfortified—un- —But what *tristesse* (laughing at the anxious turn of Elfrida's countenance) as Lady Stephens says, you would be one of the loveliest women in creation, if you could but forget your pastoral
E 3 education,

education, and look and think like the polite world."

The coach now stopped at Sir Walter's door, and relieved Mrs. Ellifon from the necessity of a reply.

Her ladyship slightly asked for the Lieutenant and Mrs. Overbury, but appeared as if their non-acceptance of her invitation did not displease her; and music and wit filled up the evening.

A N H I S T O R Y.

Mr. Overbury took a ride after tea, leaving Mrs. Overbury, Hannah, and the happy children together, when the good lady could not suppress a desire of hearing more of the boy and girl, who, from Hannah's manner and expression, she was led to suspect, either directly or indirectly, had some relation to Ellifon.

Hannah was very ready to communicate all she knew, unconditionally, but Mrs. Overbury

Overbury assured her she should think it her duty to keep the secret, she had proved herself capable of seducing her to reveal.

But besides the natural wish of coming at the knowledge of what might be a family concern, Mrs. Overbury was apprehensive, that from the goodness and openness of Hannah's heart, she was very unequal to an important trust, unsupported and unregulated by some better-informed individual.

"Turn the children out upon the lawn, then Madam," said she, "for that boy catches at every thing, and the artful can put together what the innocent disjoint; and their melancholy story must not get wind in the country."

"Mr. Wilmot," Mrs. Overbury, started, "nay, Madam, you will have no reason to be ashamed of what he has done in the affair, for thus it was that Richard told me it all happened.

"Mr. Wilmot, you know, Madam, travelled all the way down to Arcadia, to get the pigeon he had given his young lady,

(now, the more's the pity, Mrs. Ellifon) when quite a boy; and, could you believe such a thing, out of downright hatred and malice, Ellifon had flyly turned it out to a wide world, before he fet off for London, after being made Miss Ella's husband, which was the most *unhuman* and basest thing that ever was heard of; but Mrs. Ellifon knows it not, nor ever shall for me, for it would break her heart.

"Well, what does poor dear Mr. Wilmot do, but fet off to every village, and offer every villager a reward to tell him where he could find it; when lo and behold, he was directed to a place, about six miles off, where he was told he should hear tale or tidings of it.

"Passing by a lonely hovel, in full quest of the lost bird, what should he see but two or three people running in and out, and, she is dying, she must die, the general word amongst them.

"This was enough; the pigeon was neglected for a moment, for his tender heart did not suffer him to go by the door of the poor

poor and dying, without asking if he could be serviceable.

“The boy (a comical fellow, as you see him, Madam) taken with his dress, I suppose, got hold of him, and drew him, not only into the hovel, but to the bedside, saying mamma, mamma, O mamma.

“There was something so touching Mr. Wilmot told Richard, in the child’s manner of endeavoring to interest him for his mother, that he sat down by the bed, and, good soul (methinks I see him) lifted the child upon his lap, who kissed him, then kissed his mamma, wiping the tears from her face with his own little hand, and pulled Wilmot to kiss her also; she appeared quite young, and was just recovered from a fainting fit.

“She looked upon him with her dim eyes, Will you have the goodness, Sir, to hear me, said she, you seem sent like an angel from heaven to close my life; will you, Sir, vouchsafe to hear me, but we must be alone.”

“Aye,

"Aye, aye, said an old woman, and a youngish one, we will step to the outside of the door, and may be, Sir, she will tell you who the children belong to, though she will not tell us; howsoever we have sent for the parish-officers to come and take care of them.

"Mr. Wilmot beckoned them to retire, and as the dying poor creature's voice was so weak he could scarcely hear it, he would have put the boy down, that he might have stooped his ear to make it easier for both; but I warrant you no, Providence put it into his heart, Madam, to cling about Mr. Wilmot, and mamma, mamma, O mamma, was all they could get out of him.

"I am departing, said the young woman, but fear I shall be disturbed, in my last moments, by cruel questions; there is no protection for me, I broke the laws, and these infants have not a friend or relation upon earth—the parish-officers—

"Fear them not, said Mr. Wilmot,—"
"Ah, Madam," sighed Hannah, "but I shall say no more; could he have been
your

your Wilmot, he had not been now plowing the rough seas, and perhaps, at last, swallowed up by them. I am sure I never wake in the night, without trembling, for fear he should come to tell me he is drowned."

"But you forget your story, Hannah," said Mrs. Overbury.

"I forget every thing," said Hannah, "when I am set in to talk of that sweet Gentleman; for I love him as if he was my own son; and wherever he comes he makes a heaven upon earth; none of your proud looks, or your scornful smiles, or your sul-len fits."

"My good Hannah," said Mrs. Overbury, "leave your picture unfinished, and return to the children."

"Aye, Madam, I hope you don't understand me; yet no matter if you did, for I speak the truth, and have, moreover, great reason—but to my story.

"Fear them not, said Mr. Wilmot, they shall not enter this place; I will give them a satisfactory answer.

“And my dying blessing, said the young woman, shall reward you. I am the daughter of a hard-working man, at the far side of this country, where I lived without guile, though I am left to die covered with shame, and shall, I suppose, be denied Christian burial.

“Compose your mind, said Mr. Wilmot, I will, both living and dead, protect you.

“I was seen by a young Gentleman, said the poor sick girl, of fortune; he was not eighteen, and I was only fifteen; he made honest love to me, for marriage was all his proposal; but he told us that wedlock would not be lawful, if we even went to church, before he was one-and-twenty; nor then, either, without his parents’ consent, which he had little hope to obtain; but that there was such a thing as marrying in the sight of God, which he was ready to do, that no one might part us; and so my father, whose industry was our chief support, dying, my mother, who had been a lady’s maid in her youth, and was very helpless, as

to

to work, and seemed to understand what he meant, was over-persuaded by him to accept his offer; and so I have lived these four years, in this place, but not in this hovel till since my mother's death, who was taken off by the small-pox, just when the father of these children, which, Heaven knows, I thought my constant husband, married and forsook me, and I have been going off with a broken-heart ever since, and my sweet lambs—

“Here a shout of the women, of they are coming, threw the poor young creature into so severe a fainting fit, that she had like never to have told to whom the children belonged.

“Mr. Wilmot called in the women to help her, and, with the little boy in his hand, met the gruff church-wardens at the door. I know your business, Gentlemen, said he, but you may return in peace, the children shall not become chargeable to the parish; I will remove them if their mother dies, and have them taken care of.”

“Has

"Has the huffy told you who is their father?" said a great boisterous woman, that had had three husbands.

"Curiosity, said Wilmot, must not, to gratify itself, distress the dying; if she recovers the fit, the arrival of these Gentlemen has thrown her into, I believe she will reveal every thing, but if she is again hurried, the power of speech will most certainly be denied her.

"We will repair, said the officers, to the cat and bagpipes, and wait the end of it.

"Do, Gentlemen, said Mr. Wilmot; and if half-a-guinea will be acceptable, to bear your expences, it is much at your service.

"And yet, Madam, you wonder when I stop my story, to praise such a man, or to lament that he is gone from England.

"The church-wardens walked off," continued Hannah, "well pleased I warrant you; and the young woman being come to herself, he again took his seat at her bedside, and the women again retired.

"Where is this hard-hearted man? said Mr. Wilmot.

"In

"In London, with his lady, replied the poor girl; rioting in wealth, without once remembering that we had not bread to eat.

"And how came he to forsake his children? demanded Mr. Wilmot.

"He would have provided for the boy, replied she, and enabled me to take care of the girl, but it was a life of wickedness, and I scorned it, nor once, since his marriage, would I suffer him to visit me; and so, to punish my pride and obstinacy, as he called it, he left me to perish, and reduced me to the necessity of walking the high road, with the children in my arms, to beg; and out of my little savings I have subsisted till now, that I have given out my last penny; and my few neighbors were kind to me so long as my money lasted, but as soon as they found me destitute, called me strumpet, and the most shocking names, from which state of bitterness you have delivered me.

"And what is the name of this monster in a human shape, said Wilmot."

"Ellison,"

“Ellifon, replied the poor dying girl; the name went, he told Richard, like a pistol to his heart.

“Never utter it more, said he, my poor unfortunate one, never utter it more. I know the man, but his wife is an angel, and must never discover how much he deserves to be despised. I will leave you to provide a place for the children and will return immediately; in the mean time here is money to buy you favor in the sight of these happy beings, your neighbors; who, having never transgressed, know not how to pity those that have; but die in peace, for heaven will accept the heart.

“Well, Madam,” said Hannah, “away comes Mr. Wilmot to my Richard, and tells him of two orphan children he was resolved to take care of, and, dear soul, was quite shy of trusting him with any more of the business; so back he goes with Richard, telling him as he went, what he could do, and what he could not do, seeing he was obliged to go abroad, and have his necessities about him.

“But,

"But, said he, I have a watch, Richard, a silver cup, and a few such things as will make you about twenty pounds, and you must do the rest till my return, when I will heap blessings upon your head; nor will your charity go unrewarded.

"But, Richard, said he, if I was to die, something must be done to gain these helpless innocents a new friend. Mr. Overbury is the man, of all others upon earth; but I am afraid if Mr. Ellison, (think of that, Madam, said Hannah, to be able to call him *Mr. Ellison* at *such* a time, but he can do every thing that is good) if Mr. Ellison should die, indeed, said he—But it will not do—we must look some other way—to Mrs. Overbury, in case of my death, they shall be intrusted; and that you, my honest, kind, Mr. Jenkins, may be no loser; in all events, whatever I leave behind, shall, under Mrs. Overbury's management, be theirs; and the world may judge as it pleases, and condemn me; my memory will be embalmed by her esteem, and my motives registered on high."

"Blessed

"Blessed heavens," said Mr. Overbury,
"and you have this letter for me."

"O yes, Madam, but you shall hear.

"This brought them to the cottage, where Mr. Wilmot expected to find the young woman dead; but lo and behold, they had got her some cordial and some food, and she had fallen asleep, and was quite revived, for two-thirds of her sickness was famine; and Mr. Wilmot bid Richard take the children home with him; he will be a father to them, said he, for he has a tender mind, and he has a wife, a worthy woman (you must think, Madam, that I cannot forbear being proud of his praises) that will be a mother to them, and they will be happy.

"The poor young woman was ready to faint with wonder and gratitude; she took an affectionate leave of the children. I shall never see them more, said she, but it will be no loss to them; farewell. Her heart Madam, was ready to burst." said Hannah.

"Richard having got the girl in his arms, bids the little boy follow. Tom, Tom, cried the boy, looking up to the head of the
poor

poor bedstead; poor Tom go too, won't go 'out Tom."

"And what should it be, Madam, that he could not suffer to stay behind, but Mr. Wilmot's pigeon, which his mother had found, in one of her begging-walks, upon the high road, almost dead with cold and hunger, and out of pure pity, seeing it tame and distressed, had brought it home with her, and sheltered and nourished it. You may judge what Mr. Wilmot felt; he seized the bird as his prize; and, O cried he, how abundantly does a good-natured action, as the world would call what I have done, for those sufferers, if fairly stated, how does it reward itself in a thousand instances! Had not the feelings of a man induced me to enter this cottage; had not my friendship for my infant companion, Richard (meaning Mrs. Ellison) prompted me to bury this act of cruelty, this desertion of the innocent, in oblivion, by becoming myself their benefactor, I had never recovered the bird I hold so dear; and you will now bear me witness, that I shall not give more happiness than I shall

shall receive; but the ill-natured stroke of turning the bird adrift, must also be concealed from my amiable friend's knowledge; it would wound her to the soul, if she knew what malice a certain Gentleman is capable of. Malice, did I say, revenge, injustice, Richard, barbarity, cowardice; for cowards, alone, are so hard-natured as to make war upon the defenceless. It is a folly to talk, Madam, but poor dear Mr. Wilmot should have been a parson."

"And what became of the mother?" said Mrs. Overbury.

"You shall hear, Madam—And so—for what signifies denying it—Mr. Wilmot's dark hints about the children, made Richard stark mad to know all and about them; but not for the matter of knowing neither, but because he thought it would be a very lame story, with an if and an and, to tell me, unless he could sift it to the bottom; he accordingly slipped over the next morning, and, finding the young woman quite pert, he got all out of her, but never let Mr. Wilmot know for fear he should be offended.

"And

“And so Mr. Wilmot stayed four days longer than he intended, to renew his acquaintance with the pigeon, and see how his young family (as a body may say) came on; and wrote the letter for you, Madam, and sent to his aunt, at Eton, to get a light place for the young woman, who said she could work with her needle; and desired she would write to Richard, when she succeeded, who would send her up; and so Mrs. Wilmot, of Eton, happening herself to want just such a person as her nephew described, for her own house; she was to have went up with a number of pretty little odds and ends about her, for Mr. Wilmot left a couple of his shirts to make her some aprons, and a fine cravat for a cap or two, and money to buy her a stuff petticoat and a cotton gown, and to pay her journey up; Mrs. Wilmot promising to do the rest towards clothing her decently, as a poor girl that had lost all her relations; and there she would have lived, and please you, without doubt, as happy as the day was long; but before a fortnight was all out, her fainting fits

fits returned upon her ; and, to make short of a melancholy story, what was to carry her to London, buried her in the parish where she died, and the children have been with Richard ever since, and no one the wiser."

"And this horrid creature," said Mrs. Overbury, with her eyes lifted up to heaven, "is the husband of my gentle, my pure, my benevolent-hearted child!"

"But don't you love Mr. Wilmot?" said Hannah, "and won't you love the children for his sake?"

"Doubt it not," said Mrs. Overbury, "and for their own; but I must have his letter, Hannah, could you not go home and fetch it me?"

"Will it not be ominous, Madam", said Hannah, "to poor dear Mr. Wilmot? for you was never to see it till he was dead; I am sure if any harm was to befall him, I should reproach myself, and think—"

"He would haunt you, I suppose," said Mrs. Overbury, "what silly fears, my good woman, do you entertain! I will be answerable for every consequence."

Hannah

Hannah set off to the lodge; and Mrs. Overbury recollecting the words of Wilmot, when he consented to write to Elfrida, to promote her union, at the Lieutenant's request, with Ellison, that he would be their son, the son of their approbation; adding, "O may I not speak prophetically, but my mind tells me, I shall be the son of your regret."

"Amiable Wilmot," exclaimed Mrs. Overbury, "the hour of my regret is arrived; the goodness of Mr. Overbury's intention sanctifies his error; but you, and you only could have made my beloved child happy."

Hannah had flown to the lodge, and back like a wood-nymph of the more rustic order; "Here it is," said she, "sealed up with all ceremony; but I do it without Richard's consent, and he will, perhaps, kill me when he knows it."

"Leave me to settle that," said Mrs. Overbury, "no one ever yet suffered for obliging me; and I think I shall not permit
you

you to be the first ;" so saying she broke the seal, and read as follows :

" The Wilmot you so kindly honored with your favor and countenance ; the Wilmot, whose soul was your Elfrida's, before he knew his disqualification for looking up to her with hope, or the nature, or the force of his attachment ; the Wilmot who struck at his own dearest wishes to promote Captain Overbury's happiness, and whose last consciousness was a prayer for the welfare of her he loved ; that Wilmot, best of women, now addresses you, as it were, from the grave, for this letter, I have commanded, shall not reach you until I am no more, in the cause of innocence, in the cause of unprotected, of worse than orphan infancy. But start not, when I relate to you to whom they owe their existence and their misfortunes ; but with the candor that becomes your character, and the indulgence that distinguishes your temper, read the story of erring youth, and the sad catastrophe of inconsideration."

“ At

“ At

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“At so early an age as scarcely to be more than a school-boy, Mr. Overbury's now happy Ellifon, formed an intimacy with an artless girl still younger than himself; the acquaintance, in its continuance, was not without consequences, as these two children are living testimonies, which accident brought to my knowledge, soon after his marriage with Miss Overbury, and removal from the country, in a situation that prompted me to become their protector, the agent of Providence in their preservation.

“The natural dissipations of a young man, having made Mr. Ellifon forgetful of their infant necessities, an invisible hand led me to the cottage of their distress, when undissembled penitence, and maternal anxiety induced their mother to intrust me, stranger as I was to her, with the tale of her criminal conduct, and its punishment.

“In the first instance, I remembered only their helplessness, their innocence, and the cruel prejudices of the world, against these

unoffending, and therefore truly unfortunate individuals.

“ I was without connexions myself, and master of the means of just sheltering their heads from the storm; had I lived, their education and their establishment should have been the best in my power; what was mine I have left them, and, under your benign auspices, I flatter myself they will grow up useful members of society.

“ Heal then, dear Madam, the youthful transgression of your son, by becoming the guardian, the friend of these defenceless children; improve what I could bestow for their support and future benefit, to advantage, and spare your tender Elfrida, the knowledge of a circumstance, which would pain her heart, by rendering the man, Mr. Overbury and heaven has made her husband, too little worthy in her sight for her tranquillity.

“ His youth is the plea that must be admitted, and the difference of education between a boy born to humble and to elevated prospects, taken into the account, if ever you find yourself incited to contemplate the contrast,

contrast, I may, upon this occasion, appear to him; for it is impossible to judge, had Mr. Ellifon's situation been mine, brought up, as he was; with the certainty of an ample inheritance, instead of the feeling and the morality your friendship may impute to me, how far I might have even exceeded him, in youthful presumption and youthful impiety; not that I would be understood to consider the seduction of a harmless girl as a venial offence; but in Mr. Ellifon's case, the wicked conduct of the mother, who gave her up to his proposals, is an extenuating circumstance, and by the magnitude of her guilt, he seems to have claims, in conjunction with his extreme youth, to compassion.

“The saving of the children for his sake, for their wretched mother is no more, may be accepted, perhaps, as some atonement.

“However, my most revered friend (for you have permitted me to call you by that invaluable name) your daughter's peace must be dear to us, her purity and innocence would be shocked to mix with, what she would deem, licentiousness and inhumanity; I there-

fore, make it my last request, that I may at once be the humble instrument of good to these infants, and of obviating sorrow, in the only instance in my power, from the heart of *your*, and when it shall be no longer a sin to call her so, *my* Elfrida; and, could my dying wishes avail you, you, Madam, should possess the felicity your mind was formed to taste, though, for some hidden purpose, denied you, in the felicity of your most amiable, but I fear—can I—ought I to write it, unhappy child. Adieu for ever.

Wilmot."

Mrs. Overbury having recovered the concern which this letter occasioned her for Ellifon's unworthiness, and Wilmot's banishment, she charged Hannah, as she valued her good opinion and her peace, never to mention a word of what had passed between them; but whenever Ellifon said, what she called deadly provoking things, to walk away, and leave the correction of his untoward spirit to heaven.

She

She then sent the children home, and told Mr. Overbury at his return, that whenever Elfrida went to London, their little neighbors should be their frequent visitants.

The poor Lieutenant had borne up against every turn of Ellifon's humor with hope; but this last stroke, which his wife could not long conceal from him, and which she knew he would keep secret upon Elfrida's account, against infant innocence, and a worthy young man, who was beyond his utmost reach, had shewn him the depravity of his soul in such glaring colorings, that he was ready to expire with repentance of his own conduct respecting him.

"An angel and a fiend," said he, "my fatal politics has coupled, not joined; and the bitterest anguish must be my portion."

It was late before Elfrida and Ellifon returned, so that the children were not mentioned that night, but finding by distant hints that Mr. and Mrs. Overbury were determined to take notice of them, Ellifon bent his wishes towards London, and asked Elfrida if she would accompany him.

"Assuredly, Sir," said she, "I may have my preference of situation, but I shall always think it right to reside where you do, if it be agreeable to you that I should.

"Very little preparation is necessary for my departure," said she, "but I must beg you will undertake to break the news to my mother, for her tenderness will feel our separation."

He did so; and, though the Lieutenant looked very grave, he did not attempt to dissuade him; "however, my young Gentleman," said he, "if it be your desire my wife and I should continue at the Grange, you must condescend to comply with some certain conditions I have to propose. You live to your choice, and must therefore only deem it fair that I should live to mine. Our income, I need not tell you," continued the Lieutenant, "is slender; it, nevertheless, enables us to be independent, and you must allow me to pay you fifty pounds a year for our board; which, with the visible services I can render you, will about set us even. The idea, Sir, must not prevail in the neighborhood,

neighborhood, that in our old age we are become dependent."

Ellifon's great soul could ill brook this command, as he called it; the Lieutenant was, however, immoveable, and there was no other alternative for him, than to behold his return to town, or to consent to his residing, upon his own terms, in the country; nor did Elfrida's heart disapprove his resolution.

This point settled, Ellifon and his wife once more bid adieu to the Grange, and, unattended by Hannah, revisited London.

Ellifon rushed into the same round of pleasures and acquaintances as before; and whilst the Lieutenant and Mrs. Overbury were amusing themselves with the prattle of infancy, and the labors of benevolence, seemed eager to be undone.

They had an elegant house, with every elegant appurtenance, though Ellifon had promised the Lieutenant to content himself with a proper lodging; and Elfrida, in her accustomed uniform of good sense, and delicate reserve, mixed with what her husband

called the polite world. But what beyond measure astonished her was, that the manners of George the Third and his most amiable consort, were *not* the standards of fashion and of imitation, with all those who called themselves well-bred; on the contrary, it appeared the universal taste of a misjudging age, to fly off from those first great virtues of the human character, piety, sentiment, conjugal affection, filial respect, parental tenderness, fraternal attachment, good humor, interesting amusements, polished industry, and every thing in the article of dress genteel and becoming; the marking features of the royal pair, and their royal progeny; she sighed and turned her eyes from the melancholy contrast, more and more confirmed in her former opinion, that art, not nature, distorted the mind; and that folly, vanity, idleness and levity, were lessons acquired, not the genuine propensities of the uncorrupted heart.

With reflections and observations such as these, did she lament the infatuation of the times, and waited patiently for the ill consequences

quences of her husband's extravagant conduct. Once or twice, in the softest terms, as an act of duty, did she ask if he was aware of what his splendid accommodations would lead to; when being repeatedly answered in the affirmative, she forbore every kind of what she was sensible would prove unavailing remonstrance, and only secretly prepared herself for the event.

A R E N C O U N T E R.

Wilmot, after the most favorable voyage, having touched but at one island to take in fresh water, arrived safe at Bombay, whence he proceeded with all expedition to Bengal, was most happy in the execution of his commissions, at least in the prospect of their future and speedy accomplishment, and, loaded with presents and rewards, for his diligent and upright conduct, returned to England, what he called a rich man, for

he had realised above three thousand pounds, besides the claim of growing benefits.

He enquired for Captain Overbury, but had the mortification to find he had left the metropolis, and was preparing, as a duty, to make a visit to his father, when he happened to see Mrs. Ellison in the front boxes at Covent-Garden theatre.

The tragedy of the Gamester was the dramatic bill of fare, and the tender Elfrida would have been distressed by the poet's pencil, if her husband, instead of being addicted to it, had entertained a dislike for the high-bred amusement of gaming; but situated as she was, she entered into every vicissitude, and felt the conclusion, a natural termination of the existence of a man precipitated from the elevation of hope, into the depths of disappointment; a transition that must fall with tenfold weight upon the heart with no resources in itself, and resting wholly upon the exterior of happiness.

Wilmot passed the evening in anxiously tracing the turns in Elfrida's countenance, who was too much taken up with the performance,

formance, to look for faces which she might know in the pit; and more particularly as her connexions were all of that rank, which made it very unlikely she could have a friend there.

Wilmot was not displeased to perceive, that she did not appear to be much delighted with her company; for, though people of fashion, they were not the people he could have wished her to approve; and, by dint of close observation and well-timed retiring, he enabled himself to discover her place of residence; then walked home more than usually disconsolate.

He every day resolved to leave town, yet every day deferred his departure, for which conduct he could no otherwise account, than from his disinclination to view a spot that must occasion him unending painful recollection.

He generally spent some hours at Will's Coffee-house, either morning or evening; it was in the neighborhood of Elfrida, and, therefore, an interesting kind of situation to him; being both generous and kind to the

waiters, was a great favorite with them, in-
somuch that it was a sort of contest with
them who should attend the Gentleman in
the Emperor's eye, the color of his coat.

One morning having read the papers, and
finished his coffee, he was preparing himself
for a solitary walk in the park, when one of
the waiters hastily ran up to him, and beg-
ged he would come and prevent bloodshed ;
two gentlemen, said the young fellow, have
drawn their swords upon each other, above,
and I fear there will be mischief.

Wilmot, ever obedient to the call of hu-
manity, bid him lead to them, and soon
drew near enough to hear the cause of their
quarrel, and he thought the first voice that
reached his ear, was not unknown to him,
though thick and tremulous with passion.

“ And so, Sir,” said one of them, “ you
have drawn your sword upon me, and hold
me to my defence, because I have made you
an offer to restore the stake I have won,
which is an handsome one, and as you have
confessed to me, your all, if you will only
give me a chance, by your introduction of
me

me to your wife, for obtaining her *favor*, and have thus wound yourself up to the sanguinary attempt of running me through the body."

"I have undone her," replied the other, "but will die in defence of her spotless honor; she is an angel, my Lord, if I am a devil; but, come on, this to your wicked heart, for seeking to make a desperate husband a pander to his own wife, and that wife Elfrida Ellifon."

Wilmot had heard enough, and endeavored to enter the apartment, but the door was bolted, and Ellifon's arm prevailing, he ran his sword quite through his antagonist's body, then wildly exclaimed, "the measure of my misery is now complete; I have not one friend on earth either to assist or pity me."

As he uttered these words Wilmot forced the door, and supporting him, for he was, for some moments, incapable of supporting himself, he said, "you are happily mistaken, for you have a friend in me who will do both."

"If

“If it is possible you are a friend,” said Ellifon, “O fly to my house, break my destruction tenderly upon my Elfrida, save her from insult, and bid her not execrate the author of the scene of horror into which she will be plunged, and deliver that most amiable and injured woman, deliver her into the arms of her family ; whilst I—”

“Courage,” said Wilmot, “you have fought in a worthy cause ; for, though I hold duelling to be the next crime to suicide, your provocation was so severe, that I wonder not at your conduct ; and the world, when it hears your story, will acknowledge, that in the midst of your vices you have brilliant virtues ; for, had I died by your hands, on a similar occasion, I would have died celebrating your honest prowess.”

This Wilmot said to him, as he hurried him to the door of the coffee-house ; and having fortunately got a Hackney-coach, which was going by empty, he bid the fellow drive up St. Martin’s-lane, beyond the church, and wait for him ; saying, “Who

knows

knows what good news I may have for you, respecting the gentleman."

"Come with me," said Ellifon, "that I may tell you all." Wilmot stepped into the coach, and the man obeyed the orders he had received.

"I must fly," said Ellifon, "England is no longer a home for me."

"But how will you dispose of yourself," said Wilmot.

"I will go a volunteer to America, and die fighting for my king and country."

"True," said Wilmot, "the French and Spaniards deserve we should meet them in the field, but you must not go without the means of subsistence; all I have about me shall be yours, and may it prove serviceable." He then produced notes, to the amount of an hundred and fifty pounds, which he pressed Ellifon to accept; but he would only take the fifty; saying, his wife would stand in need of his generosity; then wringing his unknown friend by the hand, for in his distress he was unable to discover the features of Wilmot, and more particularly under
the

the manly appearance a voyage to the East had given him.

“I will see you again,” said Wilmot, quitting the coach as soon as it stopped, “so wait, I conjure you, my return.”

He flew back to the coffee-house; the Gentleman was not dead, the sword had missed the vitals; and, though his condition was dangerous, the Surgeon who attended did not apprehend his wounds to be mortal. Conceiving himself the messenger of glad tidings, he hastened once more to Ellifon, but Ellifon, in despair, had ordered himself to be conveyed (as Wilmot afterwards learned) into the city; and, taking a chaise, set forwards for Portsmouth, and from Portsmouth for America, without a moment's delay, but without any regular plan of procedure.

Wilmot, who flattered himself he should be before-hand with the harpies, now went to offer his services to Elfrida, but had the mortification to find her in the midst of the wreck, pale but composed, and without one person to support or comfort her.

He

He approached her ; “ I am spared a tale, Madam, which I knew not how to tell you ; trust yourself with me, I will convey you to a place of shelter and safety.”

“ Wilmot,” said Elfrida, “ Wilmot a second time my deliverer ; (then correcting herself,) dispose of me,” said she, “ as your benevolence dictates ; I know by experience of how much virtue you are capable.”

He conducted her to a coach which he had brought with him, and ordered the man to go to Bury-street, St. James’s.

“ The lodgings I shall give up to you,” said Wilmot, “ are not altogether worthy of you, but the people are good, and will revere your misfortunes.”

“ I must not, I suppose, ask,” said Elfrida, “ what is become of my husband ? but, Sir, if his liberty is forfeited, I shall not hold myself entitled to be at large ; his character is an extraordinary mixture of kindness and ill-humor, but all the returns of his heart, I can, with truth affirm, are to me, and he will be sensible of the attentions
which

which the duty of a wife commands me to pay him."

"Mr. Ellifon, Madam," returned Wilmot, "is free, but the nature of his circumstances require he should leave England, and I believe I may venture to tell you he is now many miles distant from London. I will write with all proper caution to Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, they can better come to you than you can go to them, for I have every reason to apprehend the Grange is amongst the number of the losses Mr. Ellifon has sustained."

The coach now stopped, and Wilmot conducted Elfrida into a parlor, desiring that the mistress of the house would come to them, when Elfrida looking upon Wilmot's clothes, perceived them bloody, and cried out, "O Sir, what new alarms are these? my husband! has the friend of my infancy imbrued his hands in my husband's blood?"

"Dearest, best of women," said Mr. Wilmot, "do not torture yourself with needless apprehensions; the man before you would hold it blasphemy, with such pollution on his head,

head, to approach you ; but know Mr. Ellison has fought, nobly fought to chastise a titled villain, who, having plundered him of his fortune, would have bought a passport, by a restoration of that plunder, for a most diabolical purpose to Mrs. Overbury's Elfrida ; Ellison heard the proposal with horror, and rejected it with spirit ; and this infamous man of fashion is now in the hands of his Surgeon."

She sunk upon the arm of her chair ; then opening her eyes ; " Heaven, in the midst of its wrath," said she, " has remembered mercy. I am happy, Mr. Wilmot, that neither my dear mother nor myself, have lost our friend in your person."

Mrs. Portman, the woman of the house, now presented herself, with fifty curtsies and five hundred apologies for the being taken at such an unawares, proposed a dish of coffee, as the best cordial for both lady and gentleman, after their fatigue ; but Wilmot, finding Elfrida better, politely took his leave, to write, he said, to Mr. Overbury.

To

To write—would it not be much kinder to fly down upon the wings of friendship? the man that was worth three thousand pounds must be a churl, to spare upon such an occasion; so sending a note to Mrs. Portman, conjuring her to call in a Physician, if necessary, and to spare no expence for the accommodation of Mrs. Ellifon, he ordered a post-chaise and four, and throwing himself into it, set off for Bristol.

But recollecting the Lieutenant's old lodgings, and conceiving Mrs. Ellifon might prefer being there, to even the best situation amongst strangers, he stopped the postillions, and bid them take him to York-street, a place, in his confusion, which he had quite forgot; and giving these friends of Mr. Overbury the general heads of Mrs. Ellifon's unfortunate business, he besought them to tender her their best services.

Fresh horses, and a judicious exercise of bribery and corruption to the postillions, so happily expedited him, that he arrived at the Grange before my Lord's myrmidons; and was petrified to behold the little boy and girl,

girl, whom he had taken under his protection, at breakfast with the Lieutenant and his wife, as if quite at home, and under the paternal wing, and improved to a miracle.

He had, however, in his haste, still the same clothes on, and the hearts of his worthy friends were agonized. "Is Elfrida safe?" said they, and the wretched Ellifson?"

"Both, both are safe," replied Wilmot, "but a change of fortune has taken place; the vice of gaming, which Mr. Ellifson unhappily contracted, has robbed him of his last shilling, together with this house, and all that belongs to it. But, fallen as he is, I must teach you to respect him, (Mrs. Overbury sighed and looked at the children) for he is no less the victim of virtue than of vice, upon this occasion;" adding all the particulars.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury were wrapped in astonishment; the little boy looked round him for moment, and burst into tears

"Why weeps my little man?" said Wilmot.

"Because

“Because *my* Captain, is ill,” said he, “and you are ill (to Mrs. Overbury) and you are ill too (to Wilmot) and who will love me, if I lose you?”

Mrs. Overbury kissed both the children, for the girl was hanging about her in the utmost distress, and a servant was called to take them home; for, as it was Ellison's house, the children were only visitants, not residents, under their friends' roof.

Mrs. Overbury besought Wilmot not to sacrifice his life in the cause of her family, but that he would go to bed and take some repose; he refused until they had settled some plan of proceeding.

“The post will arrive in the morning,” said the Lieutenant, “and perhaps bring us notice of this melancholy event; it will not be right to quit the premises, until some proper person appears to take possession of them.”

The next morning a whole packet of letters were delivered to them, and a message, from Wilmot's father and mother, to enquire after his health; “I protest,” said he, smiling, “I forgot

"I forgot I had such tender relations upon earth, so wholly was my heart engrossed by friendship."

"This," said the Lieutenant, holding the letters in his hand, "is from Ellifon, and may deserve a speedy perusal."

Ellifon lamented the misery into which he had plunged their Elfrida; related that an unknown Gentleman, sent by Heaven, in the exigence of his distress, had furnished him with the sum of fifty pounds to enable him to go abroad, and had promised to put Elfrida safe into their parental protection.

This was a species of intelligence which was quite new to the Lieutenant and his wife, and would ever have remained so, if there had been no one but Wilmot to tell it, so incapable was he of doing honor to himself.

But Ellifon added, that being sensible and ashamed of the errors of his past life, he thought the least he could do was to endeavor to make some atonement; then stating the whole of the girl's seduction, and its consequences,

quences, he besought them to compassionate the helpless innocents, who had claims to *his* protection, as kindly as they did the infants they had already attached themselves to, informing Mrs. Overbury that he had put an hundred pounds for each of the children, and fifty for the mother, into the hands of a Gentleman, who, upon his marriage, undertook to act for him, in obtaining them some decent situation, as she would find memorandums, with his address, in the bureau; and intreating them, again and again, to pardon him, he bid them adieu.

Mrs. Overbury was amazed, and Wilmot appeared unconscious of the whole transaction.

The next letter was from Lord S——'s lawyer, to give them notice he was commanded to take immediate possession of the Grange.

And the third was from Elfrida, telling them she was comfortably situated in their old lodgings, and only waited their coming to town, to prove to them how well she deserved to be poor, by shewing them she

could

could enjoy poverty, or, at least, knew how to soften it by elegant industry.

This was a cordial; and Mrs. Overbury begged Wilmot would now leave them, and go to his father and mother.

Wilmot obeyed her, and told them sufficient of the motives of his sudden journey to plead his honorable excuse, for his seeming neglect of them.

In his return to the Grange, he took a turn round to Hannah, to conjure her to keep his secret respecting the children, and cleared Ellifon's character of all but the sin of seduction, by relating what he thought had been done for them, with the money, which he devoted honestly to their use, but which had been withheld, by one of his gay and false friends, from the poor girl, for purposes that spoke themselves, and baser still, which were prosecuted under the sanction of Ellifon's name.

Hannah was in raptures to see him; placed a child upon each knee, and bid them, as soon as they welcomed, to fall down and ask a blessing of their benefactor; she then

ran on about her dreams and her tokens of his safe return, and of Ellifon's misfortunes; concluding with entreating she might go up to attend upon Mrs. Ellifon.

"Alas, my good Hannah," said Wilmot, "all that is over, and the vanity of human wisdom strikingly exemplified in the failure of Mr. Overbury's politics; his Elfrida was once poor and his daughter; she is now poor and the wife of Ellifon."

"Take care of the children," said he, "I have brought home a fortune for them; the boy shall go to a school in Yorkshire, and the girl shall, perhaps, be the happy attendant of Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida; she will be tall by my return from India, and I suppose I shall leave England in about twelve days."

Hannah declared herself convinced, there was not such another man in the world as Mr. Wilmot, and that she had her *bodings* he would some time or other be rewarded.

Wilmot, having performed all he had to do, found himself sensible of his great fatigue; for the night he had passed was a sleep-

less

less one; he therefore begged leave to retire to a chamber at the Grange for a few hours, when taking Elfrida's picture from an inside pocket of his coat, made for the purpose, and wishing composure to the mind of the original, as he always did before he went to rest, he lay down and slept till evening.

On the contrary, Hannah wept and sighed, and sighed and wept, the whole afternoon, until Richard's heart was quite overcome by her distress; he bid her make herself easy, and go up to her mistress (as it could not be denied but they had the means) and attend upon her, as usual, until she could afford to keep another servant, and he would take every tender care of the children.

Wilmot was but just come down to tea, when Hannah, with an anxious joy in her countenance, appeared at the Grange, and being so happy as to find him alone in the parlor, she told him her design, or more properly her desire, respecting Mrs. Elfrida.

Wilmot took her by the hand. "You possess, my good woman," said he, "one of the first blessings of existence, a feeling, a grateful, a noble heart; but I foresee you will, upon this occasion, be disappointed; the Lieutenant will not, I am certain, consent to your leaving your family."

"Alackaday, Sir," said Hannah, "how you talk; Richard will, he says, take care of himself and the children, they will amuse and divert him; and what can I do better than live happily, if I even work hard? My time at home, Mr. Wilmot, is not spent in idleness; neither is it fitting it should, seeing I was born to no better inheritance than content and labor; and what says the proverb, they that will not earn shall want bread?"

Wilmot wanted no eloquence to persuade him of the propriety, as well as the benevolence, of Hannah's conduct; her attendance upon, and care of Elfrida, would have given him the highest satisfaction, on his approaching voyage, but he knew the Lieutenant too well not to be aware of objections."

Mr.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury having joined them in the parlor, Wilmot, as counsel in the cause, his heart having accepted Hannah's brief (for, to love Elfrida, gave her much higher consequence with him than loving himself) opened Hannah's request upon the Lieutenant; who, as Wilmot had foreseen, *set his face directly against it*; it was not friendship, it was insanity; his income would barely support his family, without a servant, and no one should devote their time to him or his, whose time was their fortune, unrecompensed.

Wilmot had too much delicacy to hint his ardent wishes for their accommodation; had Elfrida not existed, he would, he fancied, have compelled the Lieutenant to treat him as a friend; but the woman of his heart undone by the man that had ever held him in scorn and contempt—he only sighed and was silent.

Hannah went away soon after, but wiping her eyes, and brightening up her looks, somewhat suddenly, together with a nod of no small significance, with which she honored

Wilmot, as she departed, seemed to tell him, she would follow her own inclination.

Accordingly she set off that very night for the ferry, and putting herself, without delay, into one of the Bristol coaches, reached London before Mr. and Mrs. Overbury could make it convenient to leave the Grange.

The Lieutenant had made it so much his pleasure to cultivate his son-in-law's estate, from the hope and probability of his grandchildren enjoying it, that it was a severe stroke to him to quit it; insomuch that his looks seemed to say, with the father of mankind, in Milton, "and must I leave thee, Paradise, for ever leave thee," when the hour came that obliged him to depart, though he affected to bear it with the philosophic feelings, the *stoicism* of resignation; and Mrs. Overbury was comforted by the idea of being re-united to Elfrida.

Hannah lost her way three or four times, in her eagerness to get at Mrs. Ellifon's lodgings, where, having gained admittance, she,

she, on her knees, conjured her to forgive her, and not to break her heart by refusing her attendance; but to let her live with her, work for her, and see her happy.

Elfrida was much struck by this mark of genuine attachment. "I will not," said she, "my dear woman, oppose your wishes; you shall be my humble friend, my valued companion, and I will own it revives my spirits to see you."

This was sufficient. Hannah broke the tea-pot-lid, threw down three tea-cups, and overturned the toast and butter, in her zeal to serve Elfrida, and display her thankfulness.

Mrs. Ellison enquired after her father and mother's health. "Aye, Madam," said Hannah, "and will you not remember poor Mr. Wilmot?"

"Where, how remember him!" said Elfrida.

"Why he travelled day and night down to the Grange," said Hannah, "with the bad news; stayed with Captain and Mrs. Overbury, to comfort and assist them, and

returns with them to London, in his way to India. Well, if the proverb says true, that a friend in need is a friend indeed, what shall we not say in praise of Mr. Wilmot?"

"Noble and good," Elfrida said, "he was; and her father had obligations to him of the highest magnitude; but Heaven, she hoped, would reward him."

"Ah me," said Hannah, in the overflowings of her kindness for him, "Heaven itself, unless his mind is new made, can only, in one respect, either bless or—"

"My honest, worthy creature," said Elfrida, "recollect I am Mr. Ellifon's wife, always recollect that, when you mention Mr. Wilmot to me, and you will not say what is improper for me to hear. I have not words to tell you how much I honor and esteem his character, and I am certain he holds the next place to their Elfrida, in my father and mother's affections."

"O Madam—well, I must not speak; we untaught people know no harm in these things, and cannot mean any by repeating them;

them; but your mother calls him—indeed, Madam, she calls him her son.”

“I know she does,” replied Elfrida, “and I consider him as my brother; on this ground, my dear Mrs. Jenkins, we shall ever meet, and it is here I would wish you to draw the line.”

“May be so,” said Hannah, having walked into the next room, “but I shall never cease praying he may become your husband yet, before my head is laid low.”

The third day after Hannah’s arrival brought the Lieutenant, his wife, and Wilmot to town.

The Lieutenant pressed Elfrida to his bosom, and a tear stole down his manly cheek. “My want of confidence in Providence,” said he, “my impatience to see you enriched, is punished on your innocent head; but my Elfrida will not only forgive, she will compassionate her fond father’s unfortunate error.”

“Dear Sir,” said Mrs. Ellifon, “am I not yours? and had you not a right to dispose of me as such? You know not how

well I deserved to be poor, for you could have no idea how well it would become me, or with what alacrity I should exercise my little abilities to obtain a subsistence. Riches have in all ages," continued she, "made themselves wings, and flown away, but talents live as long as our reason remains unshaken, and you will soon find that Ella Overbury, by the constitution of her temper, was *made* for poverty."

Mr. Wilmot professed himself happy to see her look so well; adding, he should presume to make the family a farewell visit before he left England.

Wilmot, the next day, waited upon Ellison's false friend, and base destroyer of the friendless, for there could be little doubt that his with-holding what Ellison intended for the poor seduced girl's provision, and the provision of her children, had cut her days short. He with-held it for a *pious* purpose that must be obvious.

In a word, it appeared, that knowing she was young, handsome, and in deep distress, he flattered himself he should purchase her
with

with her own money ; or, at best, by leaving her ignorant of what Ellison had done for her, compel her, by stern, by keen necessity, to put herself into his power, and from these motives he had written her the letters, unauthorized by her seducer, and wholly unknown to him, which, by the insulting cruelty of the proposal they contained, had brought her to her grave.

He, however, finding himself detected, was forward to refund, and talked of a compensation, which Wilmot disdained, in the name of the little children, from the murderer of their defenceless mother; they will prosper, said he, my good Sir, in their undertakings much better without it.

The Gentleman, then, with the best grace he could assume, paid Wilmot what he had received from Ellison; and he bore it off with honest triumph.

The first suggestion of his heart upon this occasion was, to present the money to Elfrida, as a sum of Ellison's, which he had recovered for her, and settle the children's business at some future period; but then he

was afraid he should leave a slur upon the character of an absent man, who was sufficiently blameable to need no additional obloquy; besides the danger of Elfrida's penetrating the fraud, which to her nice sense of things, could not fail to be deemed a gross enormity; for even Ellifon's memorandums would be doubted by the Lieutenant, unless the money was produced; he, therefore, like a faithful steward, brought it to Mr. Overbury.

The Lieutenant was happy to find the innocent children would not suffer by the change in Mrs. Ellifon's fortune; and Wilmot, sensible they no longer stood in need of his support, proposed a compromise with the Lieutenant, if he would not insist upon reimbursing what he had expended upon the infants, to forbear, for the present, from all acts of bounty towards them; affirming, nevertheless, that, conscientiously speaking, he should commit a robbery, by applying to his own use, what he had obtained under covenant, as it were, with Heaven, to devote to their service; though, in truth, he had no
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conception his voyage would have proved so fortunate; he deferred the point to Mr. Overbury's decision, as a casuist, who gave it against him, that is, in disfavor of the children; but Wilmot said, he would never, while he lived, impertinently break in upon the protection they enjoyed, but that at his death, he should consider them his lawful heirs, as far as the sum he then possessed amounted to.

AN APPLICATION.

Elfrida, out of tenderness to her mistaken father, bore her change of situation with a fortitude and composure, which would not have dishonored Seneca himself; not a tear, nor a sigh, escaped her. "Behold," she would say to her mother, "how unnecessary our cruel separation to make me rich; for the very evil that others torture themselves so much about, sits quite easy upon my feelings. I will, as soon as we are settled a little,

little, strike out some method for deriving emolument from my talents; this is the age of liberality, and my pencil shall bring its industry decent rewards; tambour, embroidery, netting, I am perfectly mistress of; and, O insult me not so far as to call it degrading, to make use of the weapons with which God and nature has furnished me, to defend myself against the dæmon poverty. It is true," continued she, "that with the humble wishes we possess, your income, my dear father, is sufficient to keep us, what pride, a false, mean pride, calls independent; but should Heaven think fit to deprive me of my parents, what will now be my amusement, would, perhaps, be a toil to me; do yourselves then the justice to *see*, and me the pleasure to approve my conduct, and you will give the blessing of peace to your Elfrida."

"Patience on a monument," the Lieutenant would say, to Mrs. Overbury, "smiling at grief."

Wilmot's benevolent heart forgot its own cares in Elfrida's, and he lamented his want
of

of power to do her some essential good; the idea of her working for her living, as she calmly called it, made him frantic; yet with the whole Eastern world at his feet, it would have been impossible, as she was situated, to impart any portion of it to her.

But whilst Wilmot was thus tormenting himself, that he could not be actively employed in her accommodation, Elfrida was plotting how to render his friendship useful to her, by way of agreeable surprize, at some future day, for her beloved father and mother.

She accordingly, with the assistance of Hannah and Mrs. Dawson, the woman of the house, having bound them both down by a solemn promise of secrecy, not to betray her, to her paternal friends, disposed of her whole wardrobe and little ornaments, which her fall from affluence, she said, had made idle possessions to her, except a mulberry lutestring gown and petticoat, which, by the way, though unknown to herself, was a most becoming color to her for her best; her morning-dresses to be converted into
plain

plain night-gowns, with suitable linen for her common appearance, and in very moderate quantities, was the whole of her reserve; and, as her husband's gambling stake did not include what belonged to her person, except a pair of diamond ear-rings and a repeater that ran upon brilliants, which he had bought her, though her clothes were sold under all the disadvantages of second-hand wearables, by the addition of her little trinkets, she found herself mistress of an hundred and ninety pounds; when sending for Wilmot, the following morning, before her father and mother were up, she spread out her wealth before him, saying, "Behold, Sir, am I much to be pitied?"

Wilmot called up a kind of melancholy smile and shook his head.

Elfrida proceeded; "But, as in my situation it is incumbent upon me to improve my fortune at all points, I have taken the liberty of asking your company at this early hour, to entreat, as an additional act of friendship, you will be so kind as to lay out the hundred pounds, in such ventures as promise
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the best emoluments in India, and I will thankfully receive from you the genuine profits. You will easily conjecture, that this money is the produce of my now useless articles of dress; and I am persuaded it will give you pleasure to know, even with this chance of mercantile advantage, that I am not destitute of a resource in case of the exigencies of sickness to myself, or those I revere; otherwise I mean to turn hoarder, and hold it untouched, till by the exchange of my ventures, I am authorized to fly out a little in my expences, when I shall also know how to be extravagant."

Wilmot could not reply.

"Thus you see, Sir," continued Elfrida, with undisssembled delight, for she felt herself, as it were, actually abounding, "the mind you have to deal with; confer one favor, and you shall be solicited for another; but this matter must not transpire beyond the knowledge of Hannah, you and myself."

Wilmot took up the notes, and, in silence, put them carefully in his pocket-book; but
made

made a most disjointed speech of his happiness, and his hopes, and his concern, and his fears, and his astonishment, and his admiration; then bowed, hesitated, bowed again, and retired.

“If ever there was—” said Hannah.

“Come, come, Mrs. Jenkins,” said Elfrida, “it is not at this time of day that I am to learn either Mr. Wilmot’s merits, or your high sense of them; and so, without troubling yourself farther upon the subject, let us turn our thoughts to getting breakfast ready.”

“It is very hard, though,” said Hannah, “that people may not speak what is right and fit to be spoken, and that they must neither weep nor rejoice but by rule; whereas reason—”

Elfrida gathered up the ninety pounds, and, highly pleased with her morning’s transaction, left Hannah to finish her harangue alone; nor did she return to the parlor until she heard her father and mother were there; when, in consequence of her success, as she told Hannah, she added a
pot

pot of coffee to their usual breakfast, knowing her father was fond of it; and, with unusual cheerfulness said, when she presented him his cup, "Come, my dear Sir, let us not despair; are we not very comfortable? and is not that a gigantic step towards happiness?"

"My child, my best beloved Elfrida," the Lieutenant could say no more, and Mrs. Overbury embraced her daughter, crying, "Yes, Elfrida, we are, we shall be comfortable."

Wilmot saw the generosity of what Elfrida called her self-interested conduct; her love for her father and mother, and her friendly concern for his feelings; "She could not accept my pecuniary services," said he, "and so contrived to shew me she did not stand in immediate need of them, and this in so delicate, so amiable a manner, that the daughter, the friend, the wife, were before his eyes at once, and thus united touched his heart; sacred character, exalted tenderness, angelic purity! if she *had* an equal

equal upon earth, it was impossible she could have a superior. She was all the kind Gods could impart, but the kind Gods had given her to Ellifon, and he could only lament and adore.

Elfrida's next care, but with the utmost privacy, was to get employment; she cut and painted watch-cases, painted ribbons, drew valentines with elegant devices, and supplied a shop with artificial flowers; in a word, she seemed to lose herself, and all her disappointments, in the prosecution of her industry; and when her father and mother expressed their astonishment, for Mrs. Overbury often surprized her at work, "O, I have often told you how well it would agree with me to be poor."

Though the Lieutenant was too good to torment his wife with his self-reproaches, they became every day more and more inexpressible; "My beautiful, my most injured Elfrida," he would say, when he had an opportunity of soliloquising, "had your father not been deaf to the voice of nature, and the pleadings of truth, instead of the widowed
wife

wife he has rendered you, after every violence your tender mind must have sustained, you would now have been enabled to unite yourself to the object of your infant election, whose spirit and integrity, in the execution of his East-Indian commission, has done away the only objection that could be set up against him; had I not known his worth, or your repugnance to marry Ellifon, I should be somewhat excuseable, but I had my sacrifice in the midst of my better knowledge, and I have destroyed my own peace, by the unnatural wound I have given yours. Children, that in a flight of romance," he would say, "or the darings of disobedience, rush forward to the altar, and, regardless of every consequence, wed vice or penury, to fill up the measure of their undutifulness, or to please their idle fancy, they deserve the galling fetters, my ambition formed for my most amiable, and well distinguishing child; my child, who only solicited her own right, the right of a negative, where her inclinations prompted her not to engage, and who would have submitted her *will*, in every other instance,

instance, to parental controul and parental regulation. Wretched that I am, why did I refuse her a chance for obtaining the youth whom she so deservedly loved, and who, like the Patriarch of old, would have served two seven years to commerce, unrepining, to have made himself acceptable."

Wilmot's embarkation drew near, and Mr. Overbury, who spent almost every evening with him at the coffee-house, was distressed to part with him, for Wilmot had intreated him to meet him at the coffee-house, under pretence of business, but, in reality, from the discomposure with which the presence of Elfrida always threw him into, and which he was unable to conceal.

He, therefore, talked of business which required his attendance; and, though Mr. Overbury plainly saw his motive, the better to support the honest deception, he would order himself to be called aside, and rejoin the Lieutenant with the air of a man whose hands were crowded with important concerns.

One business he had, indeed, embarked in, the Grange-house was advertised to be sold;

and

and, sensible what a favorite spot it was to the Lieutenant, and next door, as it were, to what Mrs. Overbury was born to the inheritance of, he could not bear the thought of its being purchased by a stranger; he, therefore, got one of the Gentlemen, whose East-India agent he was, to purchase it, with the little demesne around it, of about two hundred pounds a year, in trust for him, paying down fifteen hundred pounds, and agreeing to have possession as soon as he could clear off the additional sum requisite to constitute him master of it.

Having made his will, which he left in Mrs. Overbury's care, and set every thing in order, the Lieutenant asked him, in the character of guardian of the little Frederic (so called after his father by that Gentleman's appointment) to take him to sea.

"He is now," said he, "in the seventh year of his age, and may go out as a Guinea-pig, and learn navigation at the fountain-head of instruction, the school of experience, but bring him me back, Wilmot, when you return, let what fortunate chance
may

may await him, for I shall wish him ultimately to fix in England."

Every one approved of this request, but Frederic was in raptures, and walking into the city one day with Wilmot, "Are you not, Sir," said he, "my own papa, for Hannah tells me you saved me from ruin, and have taken care of me above three years. Could my own papa have done more?"

"Hannah," said Wilmot, "is a busy-body, and talks about things she neither knows nor understands; I am not your father, my dear, but will always be your affectionate friend."

Mrs. Ellifon kissed the little sailor, and put the three new sixpences in his trowsers-pocket to remember her by, she said, but Frederic would not receive them upon such terms, for he would shew her he would not forget her, for the kindnesses she had done him; she then assured him she only joked, for that she gave them to him to make a man of him.

Mr.

Mr. Overbury fitted him out from his own little fortune, insisting upon it, it would be lucky; and when the hour of leave-taking arrived, he shook hands with them all; and, finding he must cry, complained Ella, as Mrs. Overbury had had his sister christened, had put her finger in his eye; for he would not own the water was tears, because Hannah told him she should die with shame for him, if he cried on going abroad with Mr. Wilmot; and Mr. Wilmot saw the second time arrive when the world of waters were to roll between him and Elfrida.

But, though he had borne Mrs. Ellison's misfortunes with fortitude, whilst he was in the same section of the globe, he no sooner lost sight of England, and, in succession, the European coast, than he felt the full force of her situation upon his heart.

Deprived of her husband, her ample provision, and without other consolation than reposing, in her hour of affliction, upon the maternal bosom, his mind, when dwelling, as it too frequently would, upon these cut-

ting circumstances, was all a chaos; he recalled to his remembrance every soft and delightful moment he had enjoyed with her; her sensible conversation, her innocent, her beautiful person, her numberless accomplishments, her sweetness of temper, her rectitude of conduct; and, agonized at fate, had she been mine! he would exclaim, when he had an opportunity of soliloquising, there would, at least, have been some stability in her fortune; ruin would never have approached her; yet for her sake I will not suffer sorrow to prey upon my spirits; I feel myself, as it were, the last and only unrent ligament of her prosperity; for, whatever wealth Heaven is pleased to pour into my lap, shall, by some happy devise, be rendered useful to her; and, for her sake, I will avail myself of my flattering prospects.

Wilmot, this voyage, left his beloved pigeon behind him, in Mrs. Overbury's care, for he had his apprehensions that the keen little Frederic might surprize him in one of his melancholy humors, calling up-
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on the bird, as was his frequent custom, to bear witness to the happiness he had known, and the wretchedness into which he was now plunged, a behavior ill calculated for spectators of any age or connexions, and particularly for a boy, who would, most probably, relate every extraordinary thing he saw (and what could appear more extraordinary to a child than to see a rational man playing the lunatic?) to the parties, from whom, of all others upon earth, he wished most to hide his unbendings, for the knowledge of them would not only give his friends pain, upon his account, but cause them to fold themselves up in a reserve, whenever his return enabled him again to approach them.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury could talk of nothing but Wilmot; discovering, however, at length, that Elfrida always found excuses for retiring, when he was the subject of their warm encomiums, they reserved them for their private hours, and she ceased to withdraw herself from their social converse.

The truth was, that Elfrida did not think it strictly proper, in her state of affairs, to have Wilmot always in her heart, or to spend her life in the recollection of past scenes, which, though innocent as the dreams of infancy, were not, she conceived, unisons to the feelings of an unhappy wife, as they held up perpetually to her eyes the unfavorable contrast between the husband, whom her father had given her, and the friend she had lost; but even this was a piece of self-denial, a sacrifice to the world's opinion, and the world's customs, and she called it so once to her mother.

But, besides her desire to guard every mental and personal act, for her own satisfaction, Hannah was so much one of them, as to be often present without their advert-
ing to it; and the ignorant, though well-meaning and good creature, looked upon all approbation of the other sex, to verge naturally and finally towards love and matrimony; she was, therefore, fearful, lest being mistaken, she might be harmlessly misrepresented by her, and her hitherto spotless

less same contract an undue shade, when every sentiment her heart entertained towards Wilmot, abstracted from the preference she imbibed for him in her infancy, were such as friendship and gratitude alone dictated, and compatible with her duty both to God and man.

AN OVERTURE.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, Elfrida, Hannah, and the little Ella, by the exertions of reason, and the happy effects of piety, passed their time tranquilly together; Elfrida called Ella her pupil, and took real delight in cultivating her mind and manners; and the child, from a natural quickness and docility of disposition, did no small honor to her amiable preceptress.

During this calm period the Lieutenant was one morning surprized by a letter from the War-office, accompanied with a Cap-

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tain's commission in a regiment stationed at Portsmouth.

The husband, wife, and daughter, stared upon each other, their thoughts wandered up and down for the source, and at last rested upon Wilmot.

"Noble fellow," said Mrs. Ellifon, "I almost envy him his feelings; you are, my dear father, the very character a worthy mind must delight to honor."

Mr. Overbury waited upon the under Secretary, and was, by him, introduced to the Nobleman who presided in the war department; his Lordship shook him condescendingly by the hand, saying, "I shall set this one appointment down as an apology, an atonement, Captain Overbury, for all the errors of office which I may commit. Men, in my station, seldom have the pleasure of repairing the injustice of ignorance or inattention, by drawing merit like yours from obscurity, and rescuing their Sovereign from the reproach of having neglected a brave and worthy character; I congratulate myself, Sir, upon the occasion.

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As this appointment commanded residence, Elfrida, though reluctantly, was obliged to give up several of her industrious engagements; she brought forth a moiety of her hidden treasure, and insisted upon its being applied to the purpose of fitting them out for their place of destination, and her mother wept at the, till then, undiscovered disposal, of what her daughter called her gay trappings, but Mrs. Overbury the proper apparel of her child. "As Mrs. Ellison, I grant you, Madam," said she, "but your Elfrida is not entitled to a more expensive exterior than she now enjoys. I thought my dear mother, you had distinguished better than to conceive finery had any thing to do with happiness."

Elfrida felt herself much interested in the weather; tempests alarmed her, both for the sake of her husband and her father's benefactor; she read the public prints with a beating heart; the name of the East, or the West Indies, threw her into tremors, whenever they met her eye; but she covered all her enquiries and anxieties, under the desire

to entertain those she loved with the knowledge of how the world went.

When every thing was ready for their journey, Mr. Overbury was surprized with a most extraordinary visitor, a Gentleman from the Nobleman who had won Ellifon's fortune, to beg they would admit his Lordship upon their acquaintance list, an honor he was most ambitious of.

Captain Overbury, with all the temper he could command, declined the overture; "An acquaintance with my humble family," said he, "could afford a man of Lord S—'s polish, very little satisfaction; a family that is humble, not from birth or education, but from choice; I mention not this, Sir," continued he, "from vanity, but merely to prove to you, that his Lordship's condescension would have little merit in our sight, for we should be undazzled by his superiority, and uninterested by his accomplishments; in a word, our walks in life are marked by the hand of Heaven far asunder, and I must, therefore, be excused, if, without

out

out one qualifying speech, I affirm, our intercourse must finish here."

Lord S—— was not, however, to be so easily repulsed; the Gentleman messenger was dispatched, a second time, to profess his Lordship's deep contrition for his past conduct, his lamentings that Mr. Ellifon was not in London, and to hint, in pretty intelligent terms, a desire to restore what the chance of the cards had made him master of.

Mr. Overbury paused—"Far be it from me, Sir," at length, said he, "to check the good purposes of any heart; but you will please to desire his Lordship, in my name, to recollect the delicacy of our situation, and he will soon perceive how impossible it must be for us, in my son's absence, to reap any advantage from his generosity."

"The world, Captain Overbury, I grant you," said the Gentleman, "is very impertinent, and merit will ever have its attendant shade; but, in the name of common sense, let not those scare-crows, envy and ill-nature, have terrors for a mind like yours."

H 5

"Sir,

“ Sir, Sir,” replied Mr. Overbury somewhat impatiently, notwithstanding all his resolutions to be calm, “ you, as well as his Lordship, little know the difference between fashionable honor and genuine honesty ; they are, indeed” continued he, “ lines of conduct, which, however, in a few instances, they may seem to be verging towards the same point, must evermore fly off from each other in their terminations ; our connexions, therefore, as well as our conference, I take upon me to declare, with the spirit of an independent, and I hope I may venture to say, an undeviating individual, *shall* end here.”

Lord S——, finding he was thrown out upon this occasion, comforted himself with the reflection that there were other avenues of access to the all-lovely Elfrida, whose person he had long been enamored of. He accordingly resolved, that neither the freezing reception which his *worthy* agent had met with, or the Roman virtue of Mr. Overbury’s character, should deter him from beginning his insidious attacks on new grounds ;

grounds; "I have a scheme," said he to this agent, "in embryo, which, if well followed up, may answer all my wishes."

Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida were astonished at what they heard.

"Ah, my dear," said Mrs. Overbury, "ought you not to have given his Lordship's penitentials fair play; the fortune Mr. Elifon lost, ought not to be sacrificed to punctillio."

"Heavens," cried the Captain, "is he not the wretch that would have bought my child of her own husband? Eternal silence seal our lips respecting him."

In the Portsmouth stage-coach was an elderly lady of a very agreeable appearance; she shed tears on contemplating Elfrida's face; it was so like a dear child she had buried a few years before, and she had a son in the navy very like her; but that she should not wish to introduce him to the young lady, for obvious reasons; he was young and susceptible, she the most finished of nature's works.

"Their child," Captain Overbury said, "was very well; but those who formed a

judgment of her merit, from her person only, would make a false estimate of it, for she was the best of children and of wives."

"Wives," repeated the old Lady, "so young and already wedded."

The Captain answered in the affirmative; but added, that her husband was gone abroad, and she, very properly, returned to the parental roof.

The old Lady sighed, approved his sentiment, as she called it, and changed the subject.

She had, indeed, two sons, the old Lady said, one of which lived in London, and the other was expected every hour from the East-Indies.

(Elfrida without being sensible of it had a sigh escaped her.)

Expected, she said, with the next fleet; she, therefore, with the impatience natural to such a situation, was going down to reside upon the spot where the India-ships usually made their first halt, and should be glad of the pleasure of their acquaintance.

Mr.

Mr. Overbury told her theirs was not a casual visit, but that Portsmouth would be their place of future residence, and that his family, he was certain, would be glad to improve their accidental knowledge of each other.

AN INTIMACY.

Mrs. Felton, for so this old Gentlewoman was named, paid close court to the Overburys, had the address to pass herself off for a very good sort of a woman; and, from one incident or other, six months passed away before her eldest son, in whose praise she was most profuse, came down to see her.

He was dressed very plain, but appeared well-bred, and well informed; they dined by invitation at Captain Overbury's, and the innocent Elfrida treated him with great civility.

"What a family they are," said Lord S—— (for this eldest son of the good Mrs. Felton,

Felton, was no other than that noble peer) "what a family these Overburys are; yet, though their queer notions are baneful to my wishes, I will not deny they have something pretty in them, even to a common observer."

"Your Lordship," said Mrs. Felton, "does not, I hope, call yourself a common observer, who has a nicer ear, or a more penetrating eye? Not a beauty of Mrs. Elifon's face, I am satisfied, escaped your notice, and yet you was present to every occasion, appeared with all the spruce and humble merit of my son, a London clerk; I am astonished at your gifts of countenance."

"Why, you know, Felton," said his Lordship, "I am a tolerable good actor; but I will own to you, I fear the part I have now undertaken, will prove above my powers; the task I mean too arduous for me to accomplish; that woman's mind, like another Troy, would stand a ten years' siege, but would not be won at last; and where the comparison fails, my despair, of course, begins; in three words, I deem it wholly impregnable;

pregnable ; it must be our first care not to startle her, the next to win her confidence ; security may do much for us ; but our measures must be the measures of the moment, for premeditation would be insanity, where not a single step depends upon ourselves. It was sacrilege to bestow such a woman upon Ellifson."

Elfrida, notwithstanding her father's promotion, plied her needle and her pencil, to keep her, she said, in practice, and fill up her hours, for that when employed she reckoned time by the *short*, when idle, by the *long minutes*.

Hannah was called back to the village of the Grange, by the news that her husband was dying of a fever, and so rapid was his disease in its ravages, that he died before she arrived ; upon this melancholy event, she entreated to be received into Mr. Overbury's house, never to quit it more ; a fall from his horse was the first cause of Richard's illness ; and Hannah having buried him decently, and gathered up her little effects, set off upon her return to Portsmouth, as per invitation,

invitation, under the hand-writing of Miss Ella, as Secretary for Mrs. Overbury, to live and die with them.

Mrs. Ellifon, Hannah, and the little girl, walked round the ramparts every day, at so unfashionable a time, as never to be met by any but humble strollers; and frequently, to vary the scene, they would go to the top of Postdown-hill, cross over from the dock-gate to Gosport, and take a turn through the fortifications; or, which was equally private, at certain parts of the day, go over the dock-yard and view its wonders; for to Elfrida it was wonderful to trace naval architecture, step by step, from the laying of the keel, to the skeleton ribs, the decking, the upper works, the masting, and the rigging, and then behold the perfect work launched upon the bosom of the deep, a British tower of defence against her enemies.

Lord S——'s visits to Portsmouth were short, and his walks cautiously taken; for, though with the amiable and unsuspecting family he passed current for Mrs. Felton's son,

son, he having before had a frolic or two of the same spirited kind, was fearful of premature detection; and the slightest hint would have been sufficient to have put the Captain upon his guard, all open as he was to attacks, until alarmed.

“Would it not be useful, said Lord S—” observing what a favorite Hannah was with Elfrida, “to take notice of that awkward woman, called Jenkins, she is their friend much rather than their servant, and methinks we might pick something out of her.”

Hannah, who looked upon Mrs. Felton as a great Gentlewoman, was not a little flattered by her condescension; condescension was, however, according to her account, an infallible mark of high birth, and genteel breeding; no upstart she in Britain, she would be bound for it, would have invited a plain hard-working woman to drink tea with her, and taken the same notice of her, for all the world, as if she was her fellow-companion, as Mrs. Felton had done by her; and then she was so fond of Mrs. Ellison,

Ellison, thought her very handsome, but what of that, she said, no one would ever remember Mrs. Ellison's person, when they once came to know her mind, for it was there she was charming above all her sex. Moreover, Mrs. Felton was the most *piouſest* woman Hannah had ever met with, with her prayer-book and her bible continually by her; and so shocked, if the sacred name, as she called it, of Heaven, was prophaned, and so good to children, that Miss Ella must not have had a heart, not to have had it won by her.

And thus did another six months elapse, without my Lord's making one advance nearer the accomplishment of his wishes, than the day the worthy family left London, except that Mrs. Felton had gained so far upon their good opinion, that they were glad to see her at all hours, an indulgence she availed herself of in its fullest extent, running in and out their house like a tame animal, until at length she came to the knowledge of Elfrida's industry.

Mrs.

Mrs. Felton was amazed. "You work for your living," said she, "and not for your amusement! Heaven and earth! I shall never recover myself! You, who would do honor to a coronet! Mercy on me, I shall never get over it! I shall break my heart to think of it!"

"O dear Madam," said Mrs. Ellifon, "those who are called to experience the transitions I have done, have quite a different estimate of life, to the ambitious, the delicate, or the vain; you find it hurt me not in your judgment, for you have frequently, with a politeness that pains me, imputed ease, elegance, and education, to my manner and appearance; and yet this elegant, and this accomplished young woman, was, at these very periods, under engagements of industry for the London shops, and now dispatching the labors, and now reviewing the fruits of her industry."

"You may say what you please," cried Mrs. Felton, "but it is a cutting discovery."

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The truth indeed was, that Mrs. Felton had a tolerable knowledge of the female heart, and was convinced, that the private was the undisguised moment, for many and many a young damsel had she met with, in the course of her honorable profession (for the fact was, that Mrs. Felton was a finished procuress) who appeared all that was amiable in woman, and who had so dexterously kept up the ball, that she was on the point of giving them up as invincible, until a lucky intrusion into their privacy gave her the felicity to find, that these very discreet, these very demure, and these very sentimental ladies, loved idleness, or dress, or good eating and drinking, or gay authors (a most favorable symptom) or had some other characteristic foible, which, from not having the power to gratify, they had the address to conceal, and thereby enabled herself to suit the bait to the appetite; she had gained the victory, in the instant she conceived herself foiled, and triumphed, as it were, in the very arms of disappointment.

Upon

Upon this discovery, respecting Elfrida, she was in total despair ; for to meet with a heart, which not only dared to be poor, but delighted in employment, so deranged her, that she wrote to his Lordship to come down immediately.

My Lord taking it into his head to fancy that his successful hour was arrived, was unspeakably chagrined to hear her declare that her hopes were at an end ; “ For, could you have imagined such a thing possible,” said she, “ that all-lovely woman has a soul as free from ambition, folly and vanity, as her face is from blemish, and is, at this very instant, to the eternal disappointment of your Lordship’s schemes, working for her bread ; or, which is the same thing, to make a reserve for herself and her mother, in case of their surviving the Captain. No, no, my Lord, had she but complained to me of her fallen state, had she but confessed her situation moping, for ever by the side of her father and mother irksome, had I but found her at her looking-glass, that corruptor of young minds, and altar of pride, for when
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men conceive they have once undermined the virtue of one of these Narcissus' in petticoats, she is much rather self-betrayed, than the dupe of her lover's arts; had she, in short, my Lord, one assumed virtue, or one latent vice, I would have pledged myself for your obtaining her, but the symptoms are mortal, and portend the death of your attempts."

"And is there no way of sapping, of storming, of surprizing the garrison," said his Lordship, "no centinel that can be bought up, no Argus that can be laid asleep; for Mrs. Felton, I am determined, and it is now, I believe, no longer in my choice, by what means, either by stratagem or violence, to have her in my possession."

"Why then, my Lord," said Mrs. Felton, "it is my opinion, you must raise the siege for the present, and defer the opening of the next campaign until the enemy can be drawn out of her strong hold, to which the approaching winter will be most unfavorable. In plain English, you must wait
till

till May or June before you take another step."

"A very pretty task, Mrs. Felton, you are setting my patience; this, I take it, is the first week in October, and she has already seen a year and a half at Portsmouth; but a-propos," cried his Lordship, "the Captain, in the long story, he tells of his child's being carried away upon the water, teaches us how to manage, situated as we are upon the sea-coast, so we will look forward, to prevailing upon her to enter into some water expedition, when, under favor of the winds and waves, we will bear her to some happy spot, and, perhaps, without so much as asking her consent, draw her into a little trip to France, in all which, you, Mrs. Felton, must accompany us."

"Your Lordship knows you may always command me," said Mrs. Felton, "but it strikes me it would be polite to have another fellow-voyager. Mrs. Hannah's curiosity is at least equal to her simplicity, and the name of a ghost will at any time frighten her from her station, as a watch-woman
over

over the safety of her beloved mistress ; there is magic to her feelings in the very sound."

" You have hit the mark at last, said his Lordship, " and we have only to follow it up to be successful."

Whenever Mrs. Felton had an opportunity she artfully filled Hannah's head full of sea expeditions. " About nine miles from hence," she would say to her, " is the Isle of Wight, and if your family was not so particular, what a pretty party we might make, some time or other, when my son comes down, with a few *genteel* stores, and a little music ; and then, Mrs. Jenkins, you would see what it was to go to sea, and to be upon pleasure-parties on the water, and I am sure you would like it vastly, if we could contrive to bring it about."

This idea having taken possession of Hannah's brain, she longed as much for the return of summer as his Lordship did, and Mrs. Ellifon having a complaint in her stomach, which the apothecary was fearful tended to a consumption ; he was led by
Mrs.

Mrs. Felton, who, from complimenting his medical skill, and paying him handsomely for any little attendance she stood in need of, had acquired a great ascendancy over him, to prescribe sea-sickness for her cure.

Hannah, catching at the sound, cried, "Oh, Madam, do go with Mrs. Felton to the Isle of Wight, she has promised to take me as soon as the weather is fine; it will do you a monstrous deal of good."

Mrs. Ellison told Mrs. Felton the apothecary's opinion; she affected surprize, "But, to be sure," said she, "he must know best; and if you are inclined to make the experiment, we will, somehow or other, go as far as the Island; but, unless Captain and Mrs. Overbury will favor us with their company, it must be when my son is here, for we cannot go, with either safety or propriety, unless we have the likeness of a man to attend us."

Mr. Overbury said he was not fond of the water, and Mrs. Overbury declared she would not go without him.

“ But,” said the Captain, “ if a little snug party can be made up, of which Hannah’s eyes informs me she would be happy to participate, both your health and amusement, my dear Elfrida, might be promoted ; and, indeed, it would be desirable to engage you in a pleasant excursion, for you confine yourself too much.”

Elfrida did not oppose, which was looked upon by Mrs. Felton to be the same thing as consenting to the proposal, and she informed my Lord, that they were got a few points nearer their wishes.

May proved a very cold month, and June was so intensely hot that they had frequent thunder-storms ; Lord S ——— was frantic ; but, at last, he had the extatic pleasure of seeing preparations going forwards, under the authority of Mrs. Ellison’s absolute engagement, and the day appointed, at the distance of only two days.

Hannah was lifted out of herself with joy, she had a new cap provided for the occasion, a gown of Mrs. Cluwyd’s, given by Elfrida,
was

was brought out, which had the very air of Westminster-abbey, and seemed risen from the tombs; and never child longed for a school-ball, as she did for the sixth of June.

The sixth of June came, and Mrs. Ellison proposed Ella's going, but the child said, she should be terrified at the sea, and would much rather stay with Captain and Mrs. Overbury.

Elfrida was dressed in virgin white, and might have sat for the emblem of the golden age, for innocence and peace beamed forth in her countenance; we shall say nothing of Hannah, but my Lord exchanged a significant look with Mrs. Felton, on beholding her, and the word *outré*, caught Elfrida's ear, she smiled at the contrast, for there was no denying that my Lord's polish and Hannah's simplicity were a wide distance from each other.

They embarked with prosperous gales, and every prospect of pleasure and enjoyment, when having run through the fleet at Spithead, the off-shore from the Island, a

circumstance that Elfrida was not aware of, and got below South-sea Castle, and Cumberland-fort, and so fairly clear of the shore, as to have nothing to fear from observation or assistance, my Lord began to be very assiduous about Mrs. Ellifon.

She was displeased but not alarmed, repented of her expedition but dreamed not of her danger; her worst conclusion was, that the young man might not be quite sober, and, therefore, too probably, very troublesome; and she endeavored, without shewing her full dissatisfaction, to change her seat.

He took both her hands in his, and prevented her intention, swore they were the handsomest ever formed, kissed them once, twice, thrice.

Mrs. Ellifon insisted upon his altering his behavior, and begged Mrs. Felton would make her relation sensible of its impropriety.

Mrs. Felton laughed, parties of pleasure admitted, she said, of innocent freedoms, and

and so lovely a woman as Mrs. Ellifon, must not wonder to find an adorer in every man of sensibility and spirit that approached her.

Encouraged by this speech, Lord S—— had the audacity to snatch a kiss, Elfrida disengaged herself with all the dignity and all the resolution of offended virtue; and Hannah, perceiving how the case stood, gave him an honest and smart box on the ear, and bid him learn better manners.

“We shall humble your mistress’ pride,” said he, “and revenge that blow before to-morrow morning.”

“Where are we going, Mrs. Felton,” said Elfrida, with all the composure she could assume.

“To some happy Island,” said Mrs. Felton, theatrically, “in the watry waste.”

Mrs. Ellifon had forgot she was young, and handsome enough to excite designs, and would as soon have thought of their running away with Hannah; she was, however, impatient to be set on shore; any where on shore, she said, and her fears operated so

strongly upon her mind, that her sickness was no more.

Lord S—— now threw himself at her feet, and, in the spirit of romantic gallantry, exclaimed,

“Such Helen was, and who could blame.”

Hannah, with all her simplicity, knowing well the beauty of her mistress, began, from his Lordship's behavior, to have no doubt of their real situation; she was, therefore, resolved to play off Ellison upon them, as she called every stroke of *finesse* or cunning, and whispering Mrs. Felton, said, she thought the Gentleman had better defer making love to her Mistress, (though to be sure it was fine to hear him) until they got on shore, lest she should fret herself ill, and they should not know what to do with her; and that, moreover, it was not unlikely, if she was frightened, but she might fall into fits.

Felton, who set Hannah down for a guileless animal, thought there was meaning in what she said; and, calling her wicked employer to the other end of the boat, advised him,

him, upon Hannah's authority, to reserve the declaration of his passion for their evening's entertainment, when they were got into harbor; but his Lordship having, what he conceived, broken the ice, was resolved to proceed, and either win her consent, he said, or form his resolutions how to treat her, before they quitted their bark.

He accordingly, upon his return to Elfrida, who, though she made the attempt, could not get at the speech of Hannah, to communicate her distress; without farther preface, told her he was not what he appeared, but a Gentleman, who had long been dying for her, adding his fortune, power, and determination to compel her to accept his proposals, omitting only his name, lest, upon her husband's account, it might excite her disgust; concluding with the tremendous assertion, that it depended upon her choice to be his queen or vassal, but that the fates had decreed, irrevocably decreed, she should be either the one or the other in a few hours.

Elfrida was ready to expire with terror and consternation; her father, mother, Wilmot,

rushed upon her thoughts ; what would they not suffer for her sufferings ; her husband, she recollected with a sigh, as the indirect author of her misfortunes, and was wholly at a loss how to conduct herself.

Sometimes she had it in actual contemplation to throw herself into the sea, and then condemned herself with the utmost severity for despairing of the protection of Heaven ; and whilst all these melancholy things were passing over her mind, Lord S—— was confidently gazing upon her, and congratulating himself upon his address, in outwitting the goddess of wisdom in an human shape, and deceiving the first-born daughter of caution.

Mrs. Ellison, at length, convinced that her only chance for escaping this deep laid and most infernal design, was to temporize to the best of her power, besought the Gentleman, therefore, to spare her before so many witnesses, and, by his generosity in complying with this request, make an interest in her gratitude for himself, when she had an opportunity of shewing it. “ We shall
not

not, I suppose," Sir, said she, "continue long at sea, and the people who are now about us, will not be our companions on shore; let me then owe you the obligation of not betraying your success to the world."

This his Lordship could not but confess was very reasonable, besides appearing a happy presage of future indulgence. "Come, then," said he, "Madam, sing me some of the songs, for the execution of which you are so celebrated, by way of compromise, and charm me into an happy acquiescence with your humor."

"The dying swan," said Mrs. Ellifson's heart, "sings, we are assured, its own requiem; and only let death step in between me and violation, I fear it is all I must ask of Heaven."

She sung her best, whilst she was straining her eyes in search of some friendly shore, and Hannah, seeing them engaged, began to tamper with the man at the helm for her mistress' deliverance.

"It is a folly to talk," said Hannah, "but, over and above the difference between
I 5 doing

doing a good and a bad action, this man will never give you half as much as Captain Overbury would do for saving his child ; add to which, that my Lady (poor Jenkins thought it would have an useful effect to talk grand) has a school-fellow gone to the East-Indies, that will return with the next fleet as rich as a Jew, and as free to part with his money as a Lord ; and, it is not to say hundreds, for he would give thousands of pounds, rather than Mrs. Ellifon should be misused."

"And what is this man's name," said the Pilot.

"Why, Mr. Wilmot," said Hannah, "the most handsomest, the most sweetest, and the most—"

"Well, well, young woman," said the three sailors in a breath, "you may hold your jaw, and set your heart at rest ; for, do you hear me," continued the Pilot, "don't betray yourself, but, since Mr. Wilmot's your man, all is safe as you could wish ; for I came home in the same ship with him from India, and he has been kind to my family,

naily, and to my three messmates, since I became a man of war's man, for we all belong to a ship in dock, and so got leave to come out in this hired boat; so mark me, silence is the word, this fine spark shall not hurt a hair of your mistress' head, though it is plain enough he means her no good; a sloop of war is expected down this tide from off Deal, she cannot be far distant, and the wind is funk, and what there is is against us, and for them, and we will bear forward, or stand in to take her as she passes, as appears best for our purpose; and now mum, and be mute as a mackerel."

Hannah would have given the world to communicate the smallest hint of this good news to her mistress, but it was impossible; in this state of anxious hope on the part of Hannah, and deep despair on Elfrida's, did they continue for two long hours, during which time she often resolved to fall at her betrayer's feet and beg for mercy, but could not hope for success, when she suddenly perceived a ship sailing toward them, and, from surprize and joy, insensible of the dis-

tance, she eagerly held out both her hands, in a petitioning attitude, and fainted away.

The Pilot took advantage of the little bustle which this incident occasioned, and gave a signal to the Boatswain of the sloop, who happened to be his particular acquaintance, to put off the boat and come up to him.

"Here's villainy on foot," said the Pilot, "and the Lady who is fainting in that man's arms, is a *near relation* of Mr. Wilmot's, "tip us a quid," said he aloud, "what does the fellow stay for," then lowering his voice, he continued, "here is foul play, I tell you, so make us friends on board, and bear down upon us; I have slacked our sails, when we had a little wind, that we might get alongside you."

Away went the Boatswain.

Mrs. Ellifon opened her eyes, and seeing the ship much nearer, again made an effort to speak, held out her hands, and a second time fainted.

Captain Venables, the Commander of the sloop, was a man of honor, courage, and

and humanity, he did not wait to hear the sailor out, but flying upon deck, he instantly knew his Lordship, through all his disguise, and invited him and his company on board, that the sick Lady might be taken care of.

His Lordship hesitated, then refused this polite offer; but the Captain declared he should not proceed till the Lady recovered; and his Lordship found himself reduced to the disagreeable necessity of either complying, or owning he was upon illicit business; but, recollecting that as soon as Mrs. Ellison could utter a word she would discover all, he insisted upon pushing forward.

“That I forbid,” said the Captain, “for I have a strange fancy to speak to that Lady.”

“You are impertinent, Sir,” said Lord S——, “and shall answer this.”

“When and where you please, my Lord,” said the Captain, “but the Lady, I am determined, shall be my prisoner, until she informs me upon what ground she will be set at liberty;” and the Boatswain having contrived

trived to throw a rope, with a hook, astern of them, they were soon hauled in alongside the sloop, and Mrs. Ellison conveyed on board, followed by Hannah.

"She is dead," said Hannah, and indeed appearances justified her assertion, "and my poor mistress is killed by her fright, and that man and woman are the cause of all. O, Sir, she was the sweetest, best of women."

"I must entreat the favor of your Lordship's company," said Captain Venables, "and your's, Madam," to Mrs. Felton, "until this dark business is cleared up." So saying, he left his men to execute his orders, and carried Elfrida into the cabin, to his own bed, calling the Surgeon to bleed her.

It was some time, nevertheless, before she came to herself, and she was overjoyed to find Hannah seated by her, and to hear a voice, almost similar to Wilmot's, assure her she was in safe and honorable hands.

As she grew better she ventured to look around her, but Captain Venables, fearful she should relapse at the sight of Lord S—, asked

asked gently if she could bear the rencounter.

“Lord S—,” said Mrs. Ellifon, “where is he? How came I in the same ship with him? I will not be shocked at seeing him, though he did plunder Mr. Ellifon of his fortune, and insult him with a base proposal.”

Captain Venables moving from before Lord S—, where he had purposely placed himself, to hide him from Mrs. Ellifon, she exclaimed, “He here! Ah, Sir, am I not still a betrayed and undone woman?”

“I command this ship, Madam,” said Mr. Venables, “and Lord S—, upon your account, is at present my prisoner.”

“Blessed Heaven,” said Elfrida, “what a deliverance! he would have bought me of my husband, by the restoration of all his winnings, and being scorned, as he ought, has formed this wicked assault upon my person, the person, Sir, of another man’s wife, treacherously trepanned by him—”

“Pardon me, Madam,” said Captain Venables, “his outrage is not, altogether,
so

so great as you imagine ; for, Lady, let it not wound you too deeply, this unfortunate husband is no more."

" Mr. Ellifon dead ! how, Sir, could you know this circumstance ?"

" He entered himself, Madam, a volunteer in America ; I have spent several evenings with him, have often drank your health, and heard from him the most honorable mention of you. It was his destiny, however, to be sent out upon a reconnoitering party, when some Indians surprized them, and they died to a man."

Mrs. Ellifon was astonished, her tenderness, indeed, was unwounded, though her humanity felt for him.

" Mercy upon us," said Hannah, " how thankful I am he did not appear to me. I wonder—I wonder if—if—" but recollecting herself, she withdrew from the side of her mistress, and, hurrying into a private corner of the cabin, knelt down to pray for poor dear Mr. Wilmot's safety.

" My father and mother," said Mrs. Ellifon,

lison, "what will be their apprehensions, when they find we do not return!"

"We shall reach Spithead to-night," said the Captain, "though the wind does not quite favor us, and if it is too late for you to go on shore, some of my men shall set off and let them know you are safe; but suffer me, Madam," said the kind and considerate Captain, "to prevail upon you to take some repose, and what can I offer you by way of refreshment?"

"A glass of water," said Mrs. Ellison, "will be a cordial to me."

The Captain ordered it to be brought, and presented it to her; "And now, my dear Lady," said he, "you shall be left to your self, or at least with only your own servant; and, if you will give leave, Lord S—— may pursue his voyage."

"Any thing, every thing," said Elfrida, "I consent to, that will remove me to a distance from him; for, deliverer as you have been to me, I cannot feel myself safe until he and his wicked agent are on shore."

"The

“The Lady,” said Captain Venables, “I most heartily beg her pardon; for, upon my honor, she has been treated with very little ceremony; but she may be thankful she escapes a ducking, which my brave fellows, if they knew her merits, would think her intitled to; so that, my Lord, I dare believe she will be happy to accompany you.”

The Captain conducted his Lordship upon deck, but the Pilot and his partners refusing to do any more dirty work, the Captain was obliged to give them their passage to the head, but set them on shore without fear or dismay, at Cumberland-fort, the first land they could come at, wholly unmindful of any difficulties they might meet with in accommodating themselves with a carriage.

A L E T T E R.

There is somewhat so touching in the distress of a young, beautiful, and virtuous woman,

woman, that the man who has the happiness to rescue her from danger, is very apt to lose his heart for his pains; this is the fact, and when it is remembered that eventful writers generally draw tender incidents from bold adventures, our readers will not, perhaps, be surprized to hear that Captain Venables fell in love with our heroine; but it must not be concealed that, he was soon sensible of a double impediment to his winding up the history of his knight-errantry, with becoming an enamorado; no less, in the first place, than the prior engagement of the Lady's affections to the absent Wilmot, a secret Hannah could not forbear letting out; and, in the second, that he happened to be engaged himself to a very worthy woman, who was already making the necessary preparations for meeting him at the altar; circumstances which are by no means an advantage to this work; but, as to have written up to the rules of romance, would have been to violate truth, we hope our readers will accept of that plain apology, and be satisfied with our pursuing our humble narrative.

It

It was one o'clock before the two men, who undertook to deliver a message from Elfrida to her father and mother, reached Portsmouth.

Captain and Mrs. Overbury were, nevertheless up, and waiting, with heart-felt anxiety, for news of their Elfrida.

The Sailors told them, without further ceremony, she was now safe, but that there had like to have been deadly bad work; and, though cautioned not to alarm the family, the Captain picked sufficient out of them to know Mrs. Felton was a monster, and his child the intended victim of her wicked artifice.

They slept not, so impatient were they for the particulars of this black transaction, and the morning not only restored their Elfrida to their arms, but gave a new friend to their hearts in the person of Captain Venables, who bespoke their acquaintance for his bride elect, assuring them it would be a great pleasure to him, to be permitted to introduce her to so respectable a family.

Ellison's

Ellifon's death was then mentioned, with every circumstance within the scope of his information, and Captain Overbury remarked, how wonderfully Providence had brought that event to their knowledge, which, from distance of situation, might have remained undiscovered, or, at least, unascertained, to the end of their lives.

Mr. Venables professed his surprize, that no accounts had reached them, for the commanding officer of the corps to which Mr. Ellifon belonged, had declared an intention to write to his friends, and thought he had seen his name in the returns of the killed.

Hannah spread out her sea adventures wherever she came, and did not spare either his Lordship, or his Lordship's agent; when she soon learned that the woman's character for such diabolical undertakings was notorious, and Lord S——— universally known for a man of deep enterprize and intrigue.

"Is it not cruel as well as unjust," said Mrs. Overbury, "for the persons who could
give

give you this intelligence, to have suffered an innocent family to be the dupes of such villainy; I, for my part, in a similar case, would, at all hazards, convey a hint of a similar danger, and leave the individuals, so warned, to the exercise of, at least, their own judgment, and the regulation of their own choice; they are barbarous ties that can restrain us from doing this office by each other."

Hannah, the moment she had Mrs. Overbury alone, talked of nothing but Mr. Wilmot. "As for me," said she, "who have not learned your nice and odd notions, I should rejoice in my release from a bad husband, and hold myself ready to accept of a good one. I am sure I have been down on my knees more than once to thank Heaven for having Ellison to itself; though once, indeed, I was terribly frightened, for the cat was in the room, and jumped up, and I thought it was him, himself, that touched my elbow, and fell upon my face and shrieked out; nor have I, I will own to you, Madam, knelt, in your formal kind
of

of praying since ; but my heart is busy, and my spirits all in alarm ; and I would be glad to know what chance poor dear Mr. Wilmot would have, if he was to come back safe from amongst the Blacks ; that is, what chance you think he would have ?”

“ My good woman,” said Mrs. Overbury, “ your friendship for Wilmot is an excuse for all the mistakes you commit ; my Elfrida is above either disguise or affectation, but there is a decorum due to her character, and all those who love her must respect, and not wound her feelings.”

“ I wound her !” said Hannah, “ I am sure I would sooner cut off a piece of my tongue ; but yet nature is nature, that’s all I argue for ; and, as she loved Mr. Wilmot, and told him so twenty times in Arcadia, when she was too young to know right from wrong ; and he has ever loved her with such—but you shall judge, Madam, how he loves her, for when he was going abroad the first time, and I stole to take leave of him, seeing him half dead with sorrow, (you must not be angry, Madam, for I was not

not married to Ellifon) but, to comfort him, I bid him remember, that many a one had had, for their second husband, him they could not get for their first, and that no one *knowed* what might happen; and you shall hear his reply (Mrs. Ellifon herself, with all her rigidness, could have said no more) I must not hear you talk thus, Mrs. Jenkins," said he, "whilst Miss Overbury could be our subject, my heart would, with rapture, have listened to you, but Mrs. Ellifon's character is too sacred to be lightly mentioned, and you must never let me hear you name her thus; and now, Madam, come, with all your *dickorums*, does not such a man deserve to be happy?"

"Do not let us talk about it, Hannah, time will tell truths which prudence and principle must conceal; and be careful not to distress our Elfrida."

"A fiddlestick of distress," said Hannah, having turned into another room, "I say distress, indeed, to be beloved by one of the most handsomest, and the most worthiest men in the world; for my part, I think
your

your fine-lady whims are the next thing to lunacy ; for, love is love, if you will give it fair play, in the heart of both high and low ; and a bad husband a curse, and a good husband a blessing, all the world over."

Captain Venables departed, quite charmed with the whole family ; when Mr. Overbury, with a countenance that spoke his honest feelings, said, "What a chequered life is ours ; Elfrida, my dear, you would anticipate poverty, but I now begin to apprehend, we shall, in reality, make acquaintance with it ; my half-pay is lost to us, yet, as I must conceive, we owe my Captain's commission to Lord S——, we must not eat the bread of infamy.

"O fear us not," said both Ladies, in the same instant, "throw him back his insulting gifts, and the joys of peace, and of industry shall be ours."

Accordingly, the next day, Mr. Overbury, enclosed it to the Secretary, with his reasons of conduct ; and, with the utmost alacrity, set about preparing for quitting Portsmouth ; but, to his agreeable surprize,

the third day from dispatching this important packet, he had it returned, with many compliments, from the noble State-officer, with assurances that it was procured for him, and not without some expence, as well as a good deal of trouble, by a young Gentleman, of the name of Wilmot, then in the East Indies.

Made happy in this particular, Hannah began, once more to hold up her head, for never was despondence greater than her's, upon the melancholy prospect of Captain Overbury's falling into poverty; but, though ready to burst, she kept her mouth, as it were with a bridle, until Mrs. Ellifon laid aside her first mourning; when, having assisted her in dressing, the second day of wearing a grey gown, "I wonder, Madam," said she, "where poor dear Mr. Wilmot is now!"

Mrs. Ellifon blushed, and Hannah cried, "Ah, now you look like yourself; how sweetly that color becomes you; I wish—I wish—"

"My dear Hannah," said Elfrida, "do not begin to talk wild things; Mr. Wilmot

was

was the friend of my infancy, and the brother of my youth ; but having been once a wife—”

“ What of that ? ” said Hannah, “ Mercy upon us, what a world would you make of it ! Is not a marriage at an end when death steps in to part man and wife ? and are they not at liberty to choose a second time ? ”

“ Such are the customs of the world,” said Mrs. Ellifson, “ nor do I condemn those who give into them, but I have a rule of conduct, Hannah.”

“ Well, Madam,” said Hannah, “ I do believe you will drive me beside myself ; the deuce take all fine notions, say I ; a grain of common-sense is worth a thousand of it ; and so Mr. Wilmot, who had like to have lost his life, when you became Mr. Ellifson’s wife, must be let to break his heart now you are become a widow. All the whole earth, Madam, shall not persuade me this is good logic ; no, it is absolutely sinful ; it is as if one was wiser than Providence itself, and was to say, in defiance, Aye, aye, let

Heaven decree what it may, I will not yield myself to its will."

Hannah was flouncing, and tossing the things about, all the time she spoke, and Mrs. Ellifon was compelled to smile, "Compose yourself, I beseech you," said she, "we may never see Mr. Wilmot more, or if we should, he may—"

"I cannot bear, Madam," said Hannah, "and so there is an end of the matter, I cannot bear to hear you, who are all goodness and truth, should talk at this rate; for, whatever flesh and blood *you* are made of, Mr. Wilmot, except being better born, is such another as myself, and will stare and will die with vexation, if you talk to him thus."

"No, no, Hannah, Mr. Wilmot will understand me, though you cannot; the principles by which I govern myself are neither so new, or so extraordinary, as you may imagine."

"So you may think," said Hannah, "but I would venture to be put to death, and I am not very desirous of seeing such a tragedy

gedy acted, if Mr. Wilmot is not of my opinion."

A letter was received by Mr. Overbury from Lord S——, full of professions of contrition for his conduct, and assurances of high respect, and veneration for his lovely daughter, concluding with an offer of his hand and fortune, which he would have tendered sooner, but from ideas that must be recommendatory of him, as they were something similar to their own very peculiar observance of propriety; but that he must conceive a Lady, who had been a widow two years and a half, might, without offence, be solicited to turn her thoughts to a second union.

Hannah wished herself in a situation for tearing his eyes out; an impudent, tramping, wicked Lord, she called him, to suppose her mistress, that would not hear the name of poor dear Mr. Wilmot mentioned, as her lover, would give into so monstrous a proposal, as listening to the man who had robbed, and almost murdered her husband,

frightened her to death, and intended to have made her his concubine.

The whole family were much entertained by Hannah's honest resentment of this indignity.

"And so," said the Captain, "Mrs. Jenkins, you really would not like to be her Ladyship's waiting-woman?"

"I would starve in a ditch first, like Jane Shore. No, no, such honors as he could give, every good mind must scorn; I wish I could get at him to tell him his own."

"And yet," continued the Captain, archly, "a coach and six, with the title of Countess, is a very pretty thing Hannah."

"Oh, Sir," said Hannah, with a face as red as crimson, "do not tempt me, do not try me so hard, lest I should let out somewhat against ambition, and the vanity of wealth, which you could never pardon; Mr. Wilmot is my man, and I will stand by him to my last moment."

The Captain laughed and commended her goodness of heart. "I," said he, "despise
this

this Lord as much as you do; and, well as I love my Elfrida, would much rather follow her to her grave, than behold her his wife."

Hannah stared, paused, and stared again. "See her buried first!" said she, "I fear that is going beyond my mark; my mind would surely give way; but then I should wish it were lawful, in a Christian country, like the heathen queen, I saw last summer in the play, to get him killed as soon as the marriage-service was finished; and it would be no more than his deserts; and, though all the world was to call it *unhuman*, I should rejoice to see him bleed."

The Captain, it was plain, did not greatly condemn her notions, and wrote to Lord S——, in such terms as convinced him, it would be to no purpose to renew his application.

"We are, my Lord," said he, "much more astonished, to find ourselves addressed upon such a subject as a marriage-treaty, by a person who has injured and grossly insulted us, than flattered by Lord S——'s superiority

and condescension. Elfrida Ellifon, Sir, was always in love with poverty and pastoral life; the man of her choice must be simple in his manners, and tremblingly alive to every finer sentiment of honor and humanity. You, my Lord, are a man of the great world, and the elements might as easily be reconciled as our minds and your's."

"We decline, therefore, with perhaps too little gratitude, the favors you would confer upon us, and with all *due* remembrance of the *past*, remain, as we *ought*,

Yours, &c. &c.

Lord S—— was piqued as much as his love was disappointed; he vowed revenge, and made several mean attempts to deprive Mr. Overbury of his commission; but, for the honor of the British Ministry, the Secretary was firm in his approbation of the Captain, and deaf to every malicious attack his enemies contrived to make upon his character.

Captain Venables brought his Lady down to Portsmouth, who was a very agreeable woman,

woman, and so much in the stile of Elfrida, that the whole family were enlivened by her company and conversation; she was, indeed, the first woman Elfrida ever formed an intimacy with; for the Ladies she had been introduced to in London, were too well-bred to be rational; too deeply engaged in the polite *routine*, to have any acquaintance with sentiment, and too lively to be capable of reflection; whereas, Mrs. Venables, like herself, before her heart had painful weights upon it, was,

An equal mixture of good humor,

And sensible soft melancholy.

These were, indeed, some of the happiest days Elfrida had enjoyed, since the breaking up of her infant pleasures.

Captain Venables, who was a man of fortune, and had received a very handsome sum with his wife, had a job-coach, in which the Ladies took their daily airings, Elfrida, Mrs. Venables, Mrs. Overbury, and the little Ella, escorted by the Captains Overbury and Venables; and, though Ella grew up rather plain, she was a very amiable

child, and promised to make a valuable woman.

But all this time Hannah was upon tenter-hooks, and went about, enquiring of every one, how a letter could be sent to meet a Gentleman coming from the East-Indies.

She was at length told, that the only method was, to direct it to be left for him at St. Helena, to be sent back, if the Indian-man, on board of which he was, did not happen to touch there.

Hannah was in extacies, and thus poured her heart out upon paper, to her beloved Mr. Wilmot.

“Alackaday, Sir, there was a time when a letter from your old friend Hannah Jenkins, would have done your heart good; and so let it now, for the sake of its happy contents.

“For that cruel and ill-natured man, Mr. Ellifon, is dead and gone; and the best of women, as I once told you, may still be yours, if you manage yourself right; but you will have a deadly deal of ground to go over; for what with their *delikisses* and their sentiments,

sentiments, I dare not put in a word, not so much as edge-ways, in your favor, though Mrs. Ellifon blushed once when I mentioned your name at an unawares, not one of your angry and haughty blushes, but such as I have seen overspread her face in Arcadia, after you came from London, and she had found out, poor thing, that all her fine gratitude and innocent doating upon you, was likely to end in downright love.

“ Well, let it be a caution say I, how those people that can take pleasure in making themselves miserable, let love steal upon their hearts; for why? there is no way of escaping, when once they come to see their danger, than by shunning the acquaintance of each other, and not to keep sighing and be-pitying themselves in private, and nursing their disorder, by meeting in public, until they are almost finished; and so Mr. Wilmot, as I was saying, let those who wish not to be taken in, get as soon and as far distant as they can from the *infektion*—but to come to the point.

“ Don’t you, Sir, go about to despair, because you may find some difficulty in your first setting off as a lover; such as being talked down by high-flown professions of friendship, and the like of that, but go on gently and kindly, until some look or word encourages you to be bolder; for if she is woman, she cannot withstand you.

“ But her’s, Mr. Wilmot, is not the sort of heart to be won slap-dash, as a body may say, but must be melted into love. I have not lived so long in the world for nothing; but, though I should, perhaps, be at a loss myself how to go about things, I know how other people should work their way; and beware how you disdain my advice, from thinking yourself more *wiser*, because you have been twice backwards and forwards to the East-Indies; but what of that? for if we *was* to *argue* the matter, you would be convinced that a man might look up at the sky till he could call every star by its name, and into the deep till he knew all the fish that swims, without gaining one bit of knowledge of the ways of mankind,

kind, or of womankind, which is only to be learned by living plump amongst them.

“ And, after all, Mr. Wilmot, what has your life been, but a scene of innocence and ignorance, as one may say; for, with all your Latin, and all your travelling, are you master of a single trick, out of the ten thousand Mr. Ellifon could shew you, all *hocus-pocus*, and neat as conjuration and old Scratch could make them; not you, by my truly, but would be just as far to seek as when I caught you and your Elfrida in my arms, in the sea-side, by our cottage.

“ But what of all this? you will, I doubt not, ask, and what is the woman driving at? why, hear me, Mr. Wilmot, I would not, for the globe, have you a deceiver; but I would have you bend your heart to my dear Lady's whims, till such time as you can persuade her to live without them; and, as Mr. Ellifon did, for wicked purposes, so far get the better of yourself, in the cause of honest tendernefs, and the like of they, as to hide the lover behind the friend, and not when you are spreading the net to catch her affections,

tions, be so foolish as to let her perceive it, till she is fairly *tangled*, for my head is turned with hearing her talk.

“ As for losing her to another, never fear that ; not but a Lord would have had her ; an impudent villain, for now it is out I must tell you how he served us ; but when you come back you must not set up for a fighter, for that would make Mrs. Ellison hate you, and shun you, instead of—but you may guess what I could say.”

Having told Mr. Wilmot their expedition, she goes on thus :

“ And what miracle, do you think, saved us at last ? why, as sure as you are alive, Mr. Wilmot (that is if you are alive) nothing in the whole world but my telling your name to the man who steered our great boat ; and so my Lord and his wicked partner were thrown out, for we were taken on board a sloop of war, Captain Venables, Commander, and such a Commander, so handsome, and so good, and so gentle, and so like you, Mr. Wilmot ; and then his attention to Mrs. Ellison, and such caressing of me, for her
sake,

fake, that I began to think it would be the second part to the same tune; but it ended in Captain Venables only falling in love with your Elfrida; but what of that? I could not forbear frightening you a little; for so it proved, that he was all the time engaged, and has since married a very agreeable Lady, who visits us, and makes us happy as we can be in your *absence*.

“ But, though it was your name that was the great means of saving us, it was I, myself I, from the lessons I had learned of that *quack-doctor* Ellifon, that might be said to do the business, for, finding how matters went, by this Lord almost devouring *your*, (yes, she shall yet be *your*) Elfrida’s] hands, what did I? I wish you could have seen me, but put on the downright hypocrite, and seemed glad she had got a lover, when I could have stabbed him to the heart, if I had had a sword; a lover, by my truly, for such a woman as Mrs. Ellifon, who, I then believed was a lawful and fettered wife, to be made his Babylonian mistress, who would not
have

have stabbed him? and so, as I have already told you, we all got safe on board.

“ But the best of it is, that Madam Jezebel, my Lord’s friend, as he called her, drew me into the party, to forward the business, supposing me a mere ninny, and that it would have a better air, to Captain and Mrs. Overbury, than to ask Mrs. Ellifon to go alone; when, behold, if Mrs. Ellifon had gone without me, she would either have died with fright or hard usage, or lived what this vilest of men had pleased to make her.

“ But he has been refused, I tell you, both him and his honorable offer despised, and Mr. Overbury was about to throw up his commission, supposing it came from him, but, finding where the obligation lay (ah! if ever goodness was upon earth, in an human shape I think those who know you need not go far to seek it) he now enjoys it, and calls you his own boy, when Mrs. Ellifon is not present, for they are all alike, and *feel* so nicely, as they call it, for one another, that what is thought wrong for one to hear,
is

is judged unfit for that to speak, except in private, but your safe return will bring them all to their senses, and so prays your poor

Hannah Jenkins.

“ But hold, I must not conclude without sending my best love to little Frederic, and telling you how fine a girl Ella grows, who is taught to call the Captain and his wife father and mother, and such, in good truth, they have been to her, and Mrs. Ellifon sister; and she is so good, and takes her learning so well, and remembers you with such gratitude that she deserves it all; and so no more at present, only wishing you a speedy and a *happy* return, (you understand me) I remain your's to command till death, &c.&c.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

But, most unluckily, after all Hannah's care and toil, Wilmot never got the letter, for the ship it was sent by foundered in its passage.

Hannah

Hannah told the days first, and next the hours, when the fleet was expected, and promising a sailor an handsome reward if he would let her know of its arrival, or any single ship from India, she ensured his diligence and punctuality.

But as cross accidents were no unfrequent things at Mr. Overbury's house, when the fellow, breathless with expedition, came to tell her that several ships had been seen off the Scilly Islands, and were on their way to Portsmouth, who should he meet with, instead of his employer, but the Captain, who received his news with pleasure, and with pleasure fulfilled Hannah's pecuniary engagement, and not doubting but it was her intention to run to the world's end, to welcome her favorite, resolved to keep watch and ward to give himself the chance of a first interview with him, that the great change in his daughter's life, might less suddenly unfold itself upon his knowledge, than by her wild and extravagant report.

In a word, Captain Overbury wished Mr. Wilmot to solicit his Elfrida's hand, but
wished

wished his solicitation the dictates of his own heart, not the impulse of any generous sentiments, Hannah's strange mode of stating facts might awaken in his breast.

The Captain finding, upon enquiry, that if Wilmot was alive, and a passenger in the then approaching fleet, he would soon arrive, was attentive to every footstep, and, under pretence of fearing some repeated outrage from Lord S——, gave orders that no one should open the door, after the evening set in, but himself.

The period of expectation always appears tedious; no letters, no Wilmot—the Captain was terrified.—“Can he be dead?” said he, “forbid it Heaven; he is the son of my dearest hopes, and, I trust, he will not be, a second time, the son of my regret.” The reader may therefore judge, from this state of anxiety, with what joy, as they were sitting chatting over their unremoved tea-table, he saw him pass by the window, with the little Frederic in his hand.

A letter from Mr. Overbury, which had reached Wilmot at Bengal, had told him the
story

story of their change of situation, and he had, accordingly, come strait from Spithead to their door, which Mr. Overbury opening, before he could rap, caught him in his arms, saying, "This, this is happiness; to behold you thus safe returned, my Wilmot, is happiness unspeakable; but, having taken care, by dint of stratagem, to be the first to embrace you, we will surprize the Ladies as little as possible."

Frederic flew to Mrs. Overbury and kissed her twenty times, whilst Elfrida shook hands with Wilmot, and congratulated him, with unusual ease, upon his return.

The boy then snatched a kiss, *en passant*, from his sister, and threw his arms round Mrs. Ellison's neck, who was much pleased with his affectionate attention to her; Mrs. Overbury called the moment a blessed one, that restored her to the friend of her heart; and Mrs. Jenkins, hearing a great bustle, suspected the cause, soon entered the parlor, with a Pray Sir, to Mr. Overbury, did you not call? and partook of the general satisfaction.

The

The Captain, however, apprehensive lest Hannah's delight should break forth into indiscreet observations, called her aside, and desiring her to provide a little smart supper for her old acquaintance, kept her in full employment, for she had to market as well as to dress what she purchased, so that all was secure in that quarter.

Wilmot, who conceived Elfrida was the same sacred character he had left her, was glad to find that time and resolution enabled him to behold her with less discomposure than formerly; but, to his great surprize, she introduced a retrospect of their infant intercourse, stiled him her brother and her friend, and concluded many little recollected particulars, with "You must recollect, Sir, when—"

Wilmot, not knowing the question she might call, and, dreading lest it should deprive him of his unaccustomed firmness, turned abruptly from her to Mrs. Overbury and said, "Have you, my dear Madam, heard from America?"

"Yes,"

“Yes,” replied the Captain, “about ten months ago, for the last time.”

“How, Sir!” the last time,” said Wilmot?”

“For the last time,” repeated Mr. Overbury, “for our son Ellifon is now no more.”

They were sitting by fire-light, the Captain having purposely forbid candles to be brought in till supper.

Wilmot took Mrs. Overbury’s hand, she perceived he was cold as death and trembled, she therefore desired Elfrida to make Hannah a visit, and see how the supper went on; for, my dear, said she, we shall be the sufferers for whatever mistakes her honest raptures may occasion her to commit; the children will attend you.

They both hung about her with tenderness, and Mrs. Ellifon withdrew with them, though not without a secret presentiment of her mother’s motive of conduct.

“You are ill, my beloved Wilmot,” said Mrs. Overbury.

“I was

"I was almost deprived of my senses," said Wilmot, "but I am now better; it was the last intelligence I could have expected to receive."

The Captain brought him a glass of cordial, in which Wilmot drank Elfrida's health; and "O tell me," said he, "for this night shall decide my destiny, have I your friendship, Sir? your affection, Madam, as heretofore? and may I hope, if your Elfrida should prove propitious, you will accept me for your son?"

"With the warmest approbation," said the Captain, "and you know you are sure of my wife; but let not Elfrida discover the good understanding between us, it will be time enough for us to appear in the business, when we are applied to, and her consent authorizes us to declare our previous election."

A young girl was now sent in by Mrs. Ellison to lay the cloth, she had avoided Hannah to the last possible moment, for fear she should say strange things to her; but
Hannah

Hannah was profoundly silent, though on the tip-toe of delight, and only by nods and winks conveyed her feelings.

Supper and Mrs. Ellifon entered together, and now Wilmot indulged himself with occasional views of a face he so much loved, and had the pleasure to observe, that the lines of distress which had cut him to the heart, before he went to India, were softened into lines of tranquillity.

"You ask me not, Madam," said he to Elfrida, "how I have improved the venture with which you honored me."

"Elfrida," said the Captain, smiling, "this is a private trust, I perceive, which this Gentleman has so little gallantry as to mention in full assembly."

Mrs. Ellifon related the means by which she obtained the sum of money thus employed, as also the ninety pounds she had reserved for family exigencies. "What succeeded this step, speaks itself, and I shall only add," said she, "that I never yet, in a single instance, was deceived in my good opinion of Mr. Wilmot."

Wilmot

Wilmot looked around him with an air of self-satisfaction, which seemed to call upon his friends to enjoy the compliment that gave it birth.

“Come,” said the Captain, “let us hear, Wilmot, how you have acquitted yourself.”

“This evening,” replied Wilmot, “I am a happy visitor only, to-morrow, if you please, shall be devoted to business.”

He extolled Frederic’s good behavior, and affirmed, that if he continued throughout life as he had begun, he would make a shining figure, and Elfrida spoke as highly of Ella ; “She has both a docility and a gratitude in her nature,” said she, “that bids fair for rendering her a very amiable woman.”

This was so happy an evening, that no one seemed to remember the necessity of its termination ; and Hannah was so clever, as to find out where they had sent to engage lodgings, by a question or two she put to Frederic, in the short time he was in the kitchen with Elfrida, and she went to bed with the resolution of paying them an early visit in the morning.

The morning came, and away she posted to enquire if her letter had been received, and of fifty other, to her most interesting matters.

“You do not seem half so much rejoiced,” said she, “as I expected, to hear of Ellifon’s death; surely, surely, Mr. Wilmot, though you are a man, you can never be so *unconstant* in your nature, as to love my young mistress less because all impediments are removed.”

“I fear, Mrs. Jenkins,” said Wilmot, “Mrs. Ellifon, though set at liberty, by the death of her husband, will not be so easily won as you may imagine.”

“I imagine!” said Hannah, “believe me, I imagine nothing, but fine quality foolery between you, instead of saying to each other, which I nevertheless believe to be the case, my love is as great as ever, and so let us marry and live happily.”

“Ah, if it only rested with me,” said Wilmot.

“Who does it rest with?” said Hannah, “Do you expect your Elfrida to court you,
as

as she did in Arcadia, when she thought there was nothing beyond speaking the truth, and having a good conscience? I have no patience with you; but, since I see you so backward, this is the last trouble I will give myself in the affair."

"My dear Mrs. Jenkins," said Wilmot, "can you be serious? Dare even you, yourself, touch upon this point to Elfrida? for, does she not awe us all into silence?"

"I tell you what, Mr. Wilmot," said Hannah, "too much sense is quite as great a misfortune as too little; for, as the fool cannot discern what is good for him, so your wise people overlook it, and are always forward to shake hands with unnecessary disappointment."

Mr. Wilmot gave Hannah six silk handkerchiefs, two gowns, and a pound of tea, and she left him, at length, with tears in her eyes; "For, in short," said she, "I am afraid you are too worthy to be happy, for there must be something wrong in every body's life, and, as you have no faults, you must, I suspect, have misfortunes."

Wilmot was at Captain Overbury's to breakfast, and was soon followed by a cargo of boxes, filled with Eastern productions.

"If you make many voyages," said Elfrida, "and remember us as you have now done, you will give our habitation the appearance of an Indian palace."

Wilmot looked earnestly at her for a moment, in silence. "There is but one event," said he, "that can occasion me another voyage, but that would be a decisive one, for I would never see England more."

Mrs. Ellison's heart was not unconscious of his meaning; she wished to come to an explanation with him, and set her sentiments before him, that her words and manners might be wholly unfettered; she had, therefore, received him with the cheerful warmth of friendship, which, she conceived, would testify for her, that she had no expectation of his addressing her as a lover, and hoped to find him uninfluenced by every such motive of conduct towards her.

"I believe, Wilmot," said she, "I must take upon me to regulate your Arcadian notions ;

tions; I fancy you have not, altogether, outlived the prejudices you there imbibed; the pleasures of our infancy, I grant you, were abundant, but can never be renovated, and we must adopt such as are suited to the maturity we have attained, the vicissitudes I have known, and my present—”

“If, Elfrida,” said Wilmot, “you can change the texture of my soul, you may make something of me, but whilst I possess this consciousness, which recalls the past, is touched by the present, and interested by the future, I must aspire to the honor and happiness of calling you mine.”

“Wilmot,” said Mrs. Ellifon, “sit down, and let me discuss the point with you. That you was the first object of my affectionate attachment, I neither can, nor wish to deny; you, nevertheless, like my dear father and mother, I must apprehend, misconstrued my disinclination to become Mr. Ellifon’s wife, for, besides objections founded in girlish error, it was the breaking up of our innocent affections, that wounded me deepest.”

“Had

“Had Mr. Ellifon died before I was his, you shall judge of my sincerity by my ingenuousness, I believe I should, with the approbation of my relations, have readily consented to unite my fate with yours; but my mind has, since that time, been greatly deranged; the sorrows of a distressed wife, the serious character of a widow; and, of second marriages, I cannot approve.

“That my heart was not yours, in the way you imagined, is evident, by the certainty, that had any other man been proposed, except Mr. Ellifon, as my father and mother’s choice, I should, with little or no reluctance, have married him; any *other* man, Sir, in the meridian height of my friendship for you, who had not appeared to me in the formidable light of your enemy.”

“My lovely, and ever-beloved Elfrida,” said Wilmot, “can idle opinions influence a woman of your sound understanding? were your affections unattainable, without wounding your peace, I would be beforehand with your request to desist my importunity; but, pardon me, if I presume to say,

say, while I can entertain a hope, that except your change of name, our friendship would be unchanged, by permitting me publicly to live for you, to live to promote your felicity upon every possible occasion, and enjoy the sunshine of your approbation, the incentive, as well as the reward, of all my cares; I can never cease importuning you until you prove propitious; and O, my dearest Madam, if you would not have me believe all you have professed for me an illusion, if you would not plunge me a second time into despair, unless you can affirm you have an unconquerable repugnance to blessing me with your hand, indeed, indeed, Elfrida, you must not refuse me; your father and mother are already won to my interest, and not only *call* me, but have the goodness to acknowledge, they shall rejoice to *receive* me for their son; disappoint not then their high-raised hopes of happiness, from seeing us united; but consent with that grace which marks all your actions.—Speak, my Elfrida, speak, for you are the arbitress of my destiny.”

END OF VOLUME II.